NEW
NICK CARTER WEEKLY

Issued Weekly. By Subscription $2.50 per year. Entered as Second Class Matter at New York Post Office by STREET & SMITH, *238 William St., N. Y.*

No. 352. *Price, Five Cents.*

NICK CARTER AND THE LANGWORTHY TREASURE

OR, THE STRANGE DOINGS AT THE RUINED FORT

THEY WERE IN THE ACT OF OPENING THE OLD IRON-BOUND BOX, WHEN NICK CARTER AND THREE STALWART FORMS SPRANG FORWARD OUT OF THE SHADOWS.

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Nick Carter and the Langworthy Treasure;

OR,

THE STRANGE DOINGS AT THE RUINED FORT.

By the author of "NICHOLAS CARTER."

CHAPTER I.

THE TWO STRANGERS.

Two men passed along the Fort Hamilton road one bright and balmy September afternoon.

They were evidently strangers to the locality, as they had the air of being uncertain of the way the road was leading them.

They were a well-built, well-dressed couple, and would pass anywhere as persons of respectability and standing.

Looking down the Narrows on old Fort Lafayette, they stopped and made some inquiries of a soldier who was standing near.

The soldier was an artilleryman, stationed at Fort Hamilton.

"My friend," asked one of them, "what do you call that gloomy old structure in the Narrows?" pointing to the old fortress.

The artilleryman looked at his questioner for a moment, as though to see whether he was in earnest or not, then replied:

"That, sir, is Fort Lafayette."

"Oh, indeed! Out of commission, I suppose?" said the stranger, with a smile.

"Well, there's not much doin' there now. One of our big shells would shatter it to fragments. For instance, yonder is Fort Wadsworth," and the soldier pointed across the Narrows. "It would take Wadsworth about five minutes to reduce it to a heap of stones."

"And yet I suppose Fort Lafayette was accounted a great place in its day," remarked the stranger.

"Right you are. It was there they executed Maj. Wirtz and others. It was him that had Libby Prison, where they starved so many of our Northern soldiers in the war."

"You don't say! Is any one allowed to go over to it?" inquired the second and older man.

"Yes, anybody that will take the trouble to hire a boat. There's nothing there that one can steal."

And the artilleryman laughed as though he had said something very funny.

As he spoke the sound of a bugle note was borne to their ears, causing the old soldier to start up.

"Excuse me, gents," he said, "but there's the bugle! I must be off now!"

With this the artilleryman turned on his heel and went off toward Fort Hamilton, thinking little more of his meeting with the strangers, or what their inquiries tended to.

The minute he was out of hearing the elder man asked his companion:

"What were you so particular about the old fort for, Gray?"

"Because I mean to make use of it," replied the one called Gray.

"Will it be safe?"

"Yes, to hide what we want."

They went down the road leisurely.

So natural was their every movement that none of the few passers-by they met gave them more than a casual glance.

They took an occasional look across the Narrows at Fort Wadsworth, which towered high on the side of the eminence on which it was built.

They passed the United States engineer's office, a small cottage on the left side of the road, and, instead of cutting along the beach they debouched into the highway that led to Langworthy Hall.

This splendid place was known far and wide as the home of the wealthy Col. Langworthy.

He had been an officer in the Confederate service, and the spacious grounds of the old Hall had all the elegance and taste of a Southern gentleman's estate.

The Hall itself was a fine old structure, surrounded by limes, oaks and elms, and approached through an avenue of poplars.

To make sure they did not miss the place, the two strangers inquired from a burly farmer they met if this were Langworthy Hall.

"Yes," he replied, "you will find the lodge gates a little way up the road."

And he indicated the direction in which they should go.

Then, with a keen look at the two men, he passed on.

A minute later the lodge gates could be seen around a bend in the road.

Leaving his companion, the younger man started forward.

As he approached the lodge a young and rather good-looking woman came out.

The man did not pause, but went boldly up.

"Is this Col. Langworthy's?" he asked.

"Yes, sir."

"And you are the lodgekeeper?"

"The lodgekeeper's wife, sir."

"Your husband within?" asked the stranger, smiling. It was evident he could be very pleasant and prepossessing when he desired to.

"No, sir. He went to the city and won't be back till late."

"I am sorry for that. I should like to have seen him. But you will do just as well, I've no doubt."

"Perhaps you would like to step into the lodge, sir," said the woman, civilly.

"I don't mind if I do," replied the stranger, with another smile, and he followed the woman into the small but very comfortably-furnished house.

Every article about the place was orderly, neat and clean.

The visitor took a chair at the invitation of his hostess.

He was rather glad that the lodgekeeper was not there.

He saw that the woman was unsuspicious and would talk, and that was what he wanted.

"Is Col. Langworthy at home?" he inquired.

"Oh, yes, sir. He rarely moves out these days."

"Why, what's the trouble with him?" asked the stranger, innocently. "Has he been ill?"

"Why, bless you, sir, he's an invalid—troubled with rheumatism for the last two or three years, which has made the poor, dear gentleman's life a misery to him."

"Indeed. I am sorry to hear that," responded the visitor. "The colonel," he went on to explain, "was an old friend of my father's—officers in the same regiment—and I thought as I'd a few days in New York I might call and pay my respects.

"I arrived but recently from South America, and, learning that my father's old brother officer was out somewhere in this direction, I decided to call. You shock me by telling me that he is ill."

Then, by adroit questioning, the woman being talkative, he got all the information he required, and, saying he would call next day, he left and rejoined his companion.

He motioned him to go before him down the road.

His companion understood the gesture, and continued his way until beyond a clump of timber.

"Well," he said, as the other approached, "how did you make out?"

"First-class, Seabury. Got all the information I wanted. Col. Langworthy," he added, after a pause, and his expression grew bitter in its intensity, "will die to-night!"

CHAPTER II.

A MIDNIGHT VISIT.

It was long after ten o'clock that night when a carriage drove past the fortifications along the Fort Hamilton road.

The carriage was stopped four hundred yards this side of Langworthy Hall.

As it came to a standstill, the door opened and two men stepped out on the lonely road.

Any one who had seen the strangers of the afternoon would have recognized these two as the same men.

The driver was ordered to wait with his hack in the shadow of some trees, while the two strangers went on to the Hall.

"Don't move from where you are, Tom, till we come back," warned the elder.

This and the air of comradeship that could be seen between them indicated that the driver was well aware of their plans.

"It's not likely we'll be gone more than half an hour, or an hour at the latest," added the other, as they started forward.

The driver promised ready compliance, and the two strangers were quickly lost in the darkness.

Clouds overspread the sky.

Not a star was visible.

The heavy, dull roar of the sea came up, and on it a salty moisture that is pleasant at any time, day or night.

"It is confoundedly dark," muttered the man in advance, as he went stumblingly along. "For myself, I wouldn't object to having a little light on the subject."

"It is better as it is," replied the other. "All we have to do is to get into the grounds. The rest will be easy."

After some trouble they managed to force their way through a rent in one of the hedges, within twenty paces of the lodge.

Before doing this they listened for some time.

All was quiet about the lodge. No doubt the lodgekeeper and his simple wife had retired earlier.

They would not be troubled by them, anyhow, which was one good thing.

The two had to move very slowly now.

They had to pass through a field that was so dark they could not see their hands in front of them.

But, somehow, they managed to get into the avenue, with nothing more than a few scratches and bruises.

From the avenue it was no hard matter to find the house.

Once or twice they heard footsteps, and had to get in among some trees.

The first time they found it was the lodgekeeper and a friend passing down the avenue toward the former's house.

They were speaking in quite distinct tones about Col. Langworthy's condition. Then the footsteps receded and died away. The next interruption was from a different source. It was one of the men servants of the big house, coming across lots and humming a tune.

He was evidently returning home after an evening out.

Then he, too, passed along, and was heard no more.

"If we are to meet many more interruptions like these it will take us all our time to get there," grumbled the younger man.

They emerged from the timber and went forward again.

At last they got within a dozen paces of the smooth lawn which fronted the house.

There were some of the windows still alight, being no doubt those of the servants' rooms.

"They don't seem to have all retired yet," said Seabury, stopping. "Can any of those lights come from Langworthy's rooms?"

"No, he's in the left wing, at the side of the building. Follow me and be careful."

With light steps the plotters stole around to the rear of the house.

There was one solitary light blazing from a window on the first floor.

The window was in the left wing.

"That's the place," said the leader, in a low tone. "The woman said it was on the first floor. Just stay here while I go up and take a look in."

"Very well, but don't be all night."

"You know our signal if I should need you?"

The other nodded, and Gray appeared to vanish in the inky darkness.

A moment later his head appeared in a shaft of light that shot from the window.

He had raised himself up to the window sill.

A low cry of satisfaction escaped his lips as he looked into the room.

There was a venerable-looking man at a table leaning over some papers.

His back was toward the window.

He had been writing.

There were two dozen half sheets of note paper scattered over the table.

In the light cast from the large library lamp, the watcher outside could see that all those half sheets of note paper had been written on, and that the writing was very close and neat.

Beside the old man, on the table, was a small, iron-bound box.

It was little larger than a cashbox used in one of our business houses.

This box was open.

On the table beside it were what appeared to be large packages of bank bills, which had recently been taken from the box and counted.

The sight of them made the eyes of the man outside snap with greed.

"Ha!" he muttered. "I couldn't have got here in better time!"

He now drew a revolver out of his pocket.

For a moment he looked at the weapon.

Its shining barrel threw the glare of the light into his eyes.

Any one who had seen him at that instant would have noticed the look of deadly hatred on his face.

Did the old gentleman dream of the danger he was in?

Apparently not, for he went on arranging his documents, and tying them together in neat little parcels with red tape.

"No, no," muttered the watcher, who had evidently been weighing something in his mind, "the revolver is no use in this case. I must use something safer, something that will cause no disturbance, and which will give me time to lay hold of that money and escape without raising an alarm."

The would-be assassin took from a pocket a long, slender-bladed knife.

It was a murderous-looking weapon and shone ominously in the light thrown out by the large lamp.

Thrusting it underneath the sash, the man pried open the window little by little.

There was not a breath of air moving, and as the sash of the window went up noiselessly the old man did not hear a sound.

No doubt he was a little deaf.

At any rate, he went on tying his papers unconcernedly.

It was hard to believe that this gentle old man had an enemy in the world.

Yet here was one less than three yards away, who was ready to stop at nothing less than murder.

At last the window was raised high enough to allow him to enter the room.

With the stealth of a panther he stepped into the apartment.

He crept up to Col. Langworthy on tiptoe.

In his eagerness he stumbled.

The noise was slight, but the old gentleman turned like lightning and faced the intruder.

But before he could give vent to a cry, or even a word, his antagonist sprang upon him like a tiger.

For one instant he held his knife high in his upraised hand.

As it fell the old gentleman gave an almost inarticulate groan—nothing more—and sank to the floor in a heap.

He did not move after that.

Col. Langworthy was dead!

We are told that often murderers have such a horror of their crimes after their perpetration that they become as weak and nervous as children.

If such be the case, the murderer of Col. Langworthy was made of different stuff.

He paid no more attention to the poor old man than if he were a dead dog.

Scattering the sheets of written note paper contemptuously about, he set to work gathering the packages of bank bills and putting them in the iron-bound box.

He gave a half-impatient look at the documents which the old man had been arranging. One document, however, caught his eye, and he thrust it into his pocket. Then, tossing the others aside, he locked the iron-bound box and prepared to leave the room with it as he came, by the window.

"Guess I might as well extinguish the lamp," he remarked, coolly, and, suiting the action to the word, he did so.

He left the room in total darkness, and, on lowering the window sash, he got down with his precious burden.

"H'm," he muttered, "I thought it would be heavier. But they are large bills. That makes all the difference."

Thus reflecting, he went swiftly in the direction where he had left his companion.

The latter was moving about with impatience and nervousness.

"Well," he whispered, when the other came up.

"I got the boodle," was the hurried answer. "Quick! We must make tracks from here."

"Did you—did you——"

"We have no time to talk now. Come! There's not a minute to lose."

Swiftly the two men got back into the road.

They found the driver calmly smoking a pipe, not in the least alarmed by their absence.

The two men sprang into the hack with the box they had brought back with them. The driver mounted to his seat, and gathered up the reins.

Without a word he drew his whip lightly over each horse's back.

The next minute the carriage was swallowed up in the night, and the rumble of wheels grew fainter and fainter until it ceased altogether.

CHAPTER III.

"LET THE LAW TAKE ITS COURSE."

The brutal murder of Col. Langworthy was not discovered till nearly noon the next day.

The old gentleman was in the habit of sleeping till eleven o'clock.

Then he rang for his man servant, Judson.

As time passed and no summons came from his master, the servant grew alarmed, and at last entered the colonel's room.

His bedchamber door was open.

The bed had not been slept in.

This gave a further cause for apprehension.

The servant then went to the colonel's library.

He found the door ajar.

Everything about the room was in a state of the utmost disorder.

Written documents were scattered about everywhere.

But it was only when the servant was well into the library that he discovered the awful tragedy.

The colonel was lying in a heap beside the table.

A further examination discovered a knife, driven deep into his side.

The blow of the weapon had been sure, and the colonel must have died instantly.

The servant was horrified at the discovery.

But he was one of those stolid, unemotional men, who do not express their feelings by cries and violent gesticulations.

He decided what to do at once—which was not to alarm the female portion of the household and thus make any unnecessary hubbub.

In the house was a guest of the colonel's, Maj. Bernard Scannel, who had fought with him on many a bloody battlefield, in both the Mexican and Civil Wars.

This was the man Edward Judson called to his aid.

He communicated in a few words what had happened.

The two returned to the library together.

Of course, the sight horrified them, but Maj. Scannel showed no outward signs of it.

Turning to the servant, he said, calmly:

"Ned, this has been murder and robbery both. Now, whoever got in knew something of the house—but the less said till the authorities get here the better."

It so happened that two servants—recent additions to the household—had been discharged a few weeks before for various petty thefts.

The colonel had been advised to press charges against them, but could not be brought to do so.

Instead he paid their wages and sent them about their business.

It was not known where they had gone to, but the other servants voted them a bad lot, and were glad to be rid of them.

Judson now informed the major of this.

Naturally the veteran no sooner heard of it than his suspicions fell upon them.

"But how did the assassins get in, Judson? By the door?" pursued the major, alert and eager now that a clew was forthcoming.

Judson, without a word, approached the window of the library.

It was secured usually.

It was not so now.

"Maj. Scannel," said Judson, nervously, "the window is unfastened."

"Ha! Are you sure, Judson?"

The major went over to the window.

He found he could raise it.

Throwing up the lower sash, he peered out into the grounds, while the servant stepped to his side and also looked out.

The major had a pair of sharp eyes, and saw what the other failed to see—impressions in the hard ground, directly underneath the window.

"Hello!" he exclaimed, excitedly, "there are the imprints of a man's boots, for certain. Help me out and we'll see if we can find any more clews."

Both were soon on the ground.

They took pains not to step on the imprints.

They saw that these impressions led to the hard gravel path beyond.

But at this point all traces were lost.

The two men bent over and examined the gravel.

They quickly concluded that those imprints were all they could find, so they went back again into the library through the window.

"Well, sir," said Judson, as they stood regarding the body of the murdered man, "what's to be done now?"

"We at least know what not to do. The body must not be touched till the coroner arrives."

"Yes, sir."

"In the meantime," continued the major, and his eyes brightened at a sudden thought that had come to him, "well, in the meantime just say nothing to anybody. I shall attend to the coroner."

With this the servant withdrew.

There was a telephone at Langworthy Hall.

Maj. Scannel started toward it, then shook his head and went up to a telegraph call box.

He pressed the buzzer and then sat down at one of the desks in the library and hastily scribbled off a note.

Before he had finished there was a knock at the door.

"Wait," called out the colonel, shortly, and he carefully sealed and addressed his note.

Stepping out into the hallway, he found an A. D. T. messenger boy waiting.

He handed him the note and told him to deliver it at the address indicated and to bring back a reply.

The address read:

"Mr. Nicholas Carter, —— Broadway, New York City."

The next hour was an anxious one for the major.

A strange fascination drew him to the spot where Col. Langworthy's body lay.

As he nervously walked to and fro with one eye on the door, to guard against intruders, he sought in vain to map out a plan of action.

He realized as never before the consummate skill required to piece together the delicate threads left by the murderer in his work.

At the end of another half hour he stepped to the window for the twentieth time in the hopes of catching sight of the returning messenger.

This time he was rewarded, and, with an audible cry of relief, he stepped swiftly into the hallway, locking the door behind him.

He was on the steps of the porch before the messenger had reached them.

"Well?" he exclaimed, nervously.

For answer the messenger held out a note which Maj. Scannel eagerly seized and tore open.

This is what he read:

"My Dear Major: Your note received. Am inexpressibly shocked. Will take up the case at once. Do not expect me at the house. Send for coroner and let the law take its course. Nick Carter."

CHAPTER IV.

HOW NICK CARTER HEARD THE NEWS.

The famous detective, Nick Carter, was seated in his office, in low conversation with a visitor.

That the latter was a close friend of Nick's was evident from his easy manner and lack of formality.

Chick and Patsy, Nick's reliable young aides, were at one end of the office reading.

They were enjoying a well-earned rest after some particularly arduous detective work.

"I still maintain, Nick," the visitor was saying, "that this detective business has been brought down to such a fine point that any man of ordinary skill should have no trouble in running down the cleverest murderer that lives."

"I'm glad," answered Nick, laughing, "that your opinion is not shared by my clients."

"You may well be. Take, for instance, a murder with, we'll say, more than ordinary complications. The victim has been shot and lies weltering in his blood.

"What happens? A detective is called in. He sees, we'll say, a hand print, differing entirely from that the dead man would have made. The detective immediately decides that this was made by the assassin. Is there anything wonderful in that?"

"Go on," laughed Nick, highly amused; "what would be the next step, Morton?"

"Why, it's perfectly simple. In ninety cases out of a hundred there is a marked peculiarity about the hand, such as a lost thumb or broken finger, that reduces the whole case to a mere search for a man with such a hand."

"That certainly would be a cinch," nodded Nick, lighting a new cigar.

"Exactly. With the marvelous Bertillon system installed in the detective bureaus of all the principal cities, no professional crook could escape, and, as you know, the mass of murderers are professionals."

Chick and Patsy had become interested by this time in the novel theories Mr. Morton was advancing, and they winked to each other knowingly as he proceeded with his argument.

"What I should like," continued the visitor, leaning forward in his leather chair, and taking in Nick's two aides with a glance, "is to see you run down a murderer without ever viewing the body of the victim or the scene of the crime."

And he leaned back with an air of triumph, as if he had stated an impossible proposition.

Nick looked up, quickly.

The idea was so novel it interested him.

"By Jove!" he cried, "now you've said something worth while, Morton. I dare say you would be convinced, after that, that we poor sleuths had some excuse for our profession after all."

The fact was that old Mr. Morton had the highest admiration for Nick's abilities.

He only spoke as he did to hear Nick explain in his terse and fascinating way, the thousand and one intricacies of his hazardous and complicated work.

Brrrrrrg!

The office bell rang and Patsy jumped to his feet and stepped to the door.

A messenger boy had a note for Nick.

Patsy brought it over and stood waiting at Nick's desk while the detective read it.

Nick's face betrayed no emotion of any kind. It was impossible to tell to what the missive referred.

"There is an answer," he said, looking toward the messenger boy.

"Yes, sir."

"Very well. Wait in the outer office a moment."

Turning toward Mr. Morton, he said:

"This is extraordinary news in view of our talk just now. I am called to investigate the murder of an old friend of mine who was killed last night."

"Is it possible?" exclaimed Mr. Morton, struck by the coincidence as well as by the news of the crime.

"And I confess," added the detective, slowly, showing how deeply his visitor's challenge had affected him, "I am strongly tempted to test your proposition."

Chick and Patsy exchanged glances.

"Do you mean to tell me," exclaimed Mr. Morton, "that you really believe you can track a murderer under the conditions I have stated?"

Nick paused a moment while he glanced again at the note.

"I not only believe I can do so," he said, at last, quietly, "but I propose to do it on this case. To show you to what extent I am already helped, I will read you this note."

Nick knew he could depend upon Mr. Morton to keep secret whatever he heard.

He turned to Chick and Patsy as he spoke, saying:

"Chick, Patsy, step here, and listen to this. There's something doing."

Then he opened the note and read the following:

"MY DEAR CARTER: Our friend, Col. Langworthy, was found dead in his room this morning. He has been murdered. The deed was evidently done late last night before he retired. The murderer used a knife, which is still in his body. I found the window unlocked, and there are footprints outside. Have informed no one as yet. Will you take the case?

"BERNARD SCANNEL."

After a pause, Mr. Morton exclaimed:

"What! Is that Col. Langworthy, of Fort Hamilton?"

"The same," replied Nick.

"And murdered?"

"In his own home," was the reply.

"This is news, indeed. I suppose you will start on the case at once."

"As fast as I can get there."

"But you said you would not go to the house."

"And I shall not. Nor shall either of my assistants."

"But you will have some one make an investigation for you."

Nick looked sharply at his visitor.

"I beg your pardon," said Mr. Morton, hastily. "I know, of course, you will not. But you haven't a thread to work on."

"Oh, yes, I have," remarked the detective, smiling again. "You forget the footprints!"

Following Mr. Morton's departure, a few minutes later, the waiting messenger was quickly dispatched with a note for Maj. Scannel.

Then Nick held a short consultation with his assistants.

Less than half an hour later, he, too, was on his way to Fort Hamilton.

However, his closest friend would not have recognized him.

CHAPTER V.

THE INQUEST.

To say that Maj. Scannel was surprised at the contents of Nick Carter's note would but mildly express that gentleman's consternation.

He did not know what to make of it.

But he knew his confidence in the detective was not misplaced, so he set out to follow Nick's directions literally.

The coroner was summoned.

He arrived within an hour.

Dr. Blakely, as he was called, was a portly, fine-looking man, with a very pleasant, intelligent face.

With him was a detective sergeant, from the Brooklyn headquarters.

His name was Tom Marks.

The coroner had Col. Langworthy's body taken into the light.

He made a careful examination of the wound made by the long, slender-bladed knife.

He gave it as his opinion that death must have resulted instantaneously after the blow had been struck.

Then Judson and Maj. Scannel were closely questioned to find out all they knew about the tragedy.

"When was the colonel last seen alive?" asked the coroner.

"Nine-thirty, last night," was Judson's answer.

"By whom?"

"Matt Durgan, the lodgekeeper."

"You acted in the capacity of a valet, I believe?" said the coroner.

"Yes, sir."

"And when did you last see him?"

"About half an hour before Mr. Durgan."

"That was at nine o'clock?"

"Yes, sir."

Detective Serg't Tom Marks now took a hand in the questioning.

"What business had Durgan with the colonel that he called at that hour?" he asked, and he glanced around the room with an air of having put a most important question.

"Col. Langworthy, I believe, sent for him," was the reply.

"On business?"

"That is my impression."

"Where is Durgan?" continued the detective sergeant, sharply.

"At the lodge, sir."

"Send for him."

A messenger was at once dispatched for Durgan.

Durgan did not know yet of the terrible tragedy that had occurred.

He was dumfounded with horror when he heard of it.

"Now, Mr. Durgan," said Detective Marks, when the lodgekeeper entered the library, "we have learned that you were the last man with Col. Langworthy previous to the occurrence of this terrible tragedy."

The poor lodgekeeper was almost in tears.

Strong and powerful as he was, the news of the colonel's tragic end had almost unmanned him.

"I believe so, sir," he replied, almost tearfully.

"That was about nine-thirty, was it not?"

"That was the time, sir. I looked at my watch when I left and it was exactly half-past nine."

"Why did the colonel send for you?"

"He wished to ask me some questions about an article he was writing."

"Ha! You do a little in the line of literature, then?" asked the detective sergeant facetiously, and once more his glance swept the room to note the effect of his sally.

"Yes, sir," answered the lodgekeeper, modestly.

"What was the subject?"

"Horticulture."

"Did he often send for you to pass judgment on his manuscript?"

"Well, I shouldn't exactly put it that way," replied Durgan. "The colonel knew that I was somewhat familiar with the subject, and I suppose he wished to consult me, as he did on almost everything he wrote."

The coroner bent over and picked up half a dozen pages of the manuscript which were scattered about.

"Was this the manuscript he was engaged on?"

Durgan glanced over some of the pages and answered.

"Yes. It was a magazine article."

"He had been suffering from illness for some time, had he not?" broke in the detective again.

"For several years he had been a great sufferer from rheumatism," Durgan replied. "However, when I called last night he appeared to be much better."

"In cheerful spirits, eh?"

"In the very best of spirits?"

"Do you know if Col. Langworthy had any enemies."

"He might have had, but I never heard of them," replied Durgan.

"Another few questions and we'll be through with you," said the coroner, who had been favorably impressed by the lodgekeeper's answers.

The detective sergeant, also, was becoming less suspicious in his manner.

"Was anybody with you," continued Dr. Blakely, "when you called on Col. Langworthy?"

"No, sir."

"No one?"

"No one. But stop a moment, sir," said Durgan. "Now that I recall the matter, I left the house with one of the servants, and while proceeding along the avenue, we had a chat about the colonel's condition."

"What do you mean—his health?"

"Exactly."

"What's his name, and what position does he hold?"

"His name is John Donovan, sir, and he is Col. Langworthy's coachman."

"Where was he going at that hour?"

"Fort Hamilton."

This ended the examination of Matt Durgan.

Then John Donovan was sent for.

While he was being examined Detective Marks engaged Durgan in conversation.

Donovan corroborated the statements of Matt Durgan in every particular.

Following Donovan came Edward Judson, the valet.

He told of Col. Langworthy's lonely life at the Hall, his nearest relative living in Chicago.

"Did Col. Langworthy keep much money or other valuables in the house?" asked the coroner.

"Well, as to his keeping money in the house," Judson answered, "I'm sure he did."

"How do you know."

"Because he was a very wealthy man and would have nothing to do with banks."

"And yet you are not aware that anything is missing?"

"No, sir."

"Is there a safe in the house?"

"No, sir. I once saw on his table a small iron-bound box."

"Was it open?"

"No, sir."

"And you don't know where he kept it?"

"No, sir."

He was about to be dismissed when Detective Serg't Marks said:

"Mr. Coroner, I have a request to make."

"You may state it."

"I request that the witnesses be sworn to secrecy and that the murder be kept from the papers for the present."

"Have you any special reason for this?"

"I will give you my reasons in private, Mr. Coroner," returned the detective. "I will say, however, that I have discovered an important clew by which I hope to clear up the whole mystery of the tragedy in less than a week."

All in the room pricked up their ears at this, and the coroner proceeded to swear the two witnesses to secrecy.

A further search of the library revealed nothing further than had already been found out.

If Col. Langworthy kept his strong box in the library, it was certainly not there now.

Meanwhile the colonel's body, by permission of the coroner, had been removed to another room, minus the long, slender-bladed knife, which it took some effort to withdraw from the wound.

The detective sergeant examined it carefully before turning it over to the coroner.

But not a mark could be found on it, indicating its owner.

The door and window of the library were amply secured against intrusion, the papers and documents being left scattered as they were.

As soon as Dr. Blakely and Detective Marks were alone, on their way back to the city, the coroner said:

"What clews have you discovered, Marks, that led you to make your request?"

The detective sergeant told him of the two discharged servants.

Their names were Wicks and Muller.

"Ha, that's good!" exclaimed the coroner. "I presume they had references!"

"Leave that to me, sir," replied the detective sergeant, with a knowing smile. "It don't take long for Tom Marks to run down his game."

"I believe you are on the right track," declared the coroner, "and their motive may have been robbery as well as revenge."

"Exactly," declared the detective, confidently. "Find Wicks and Muller and you will find Col. Langworthy's strong box near by!"

CHAPTER VI.

AT THE DESERTED FORT.

It was close to half-past four of the same afternoon that a man dressed in naval uniform stopped in front of Fort Hamilton, and, turning his back on the fortifications, bent his gaze over the Narrows.

He seemed to be intently regarding the dismantled fortress—Fort Lafayette.

The naval officer was Nick Carter.

He seemed to be a stranger to the place.

Judging from his uniform he was an officer of rank in the United States Navy.

He had been attracted to the spot by a grizzled artilleryman, who stood near by smoking a black, cutty pipe.

He, too, was looking over at the old fort.

He saluted the officer as the latter came up.

The two members of the different services entered into a conversation at once.

"What ramshackle place do you call that, my friend?" asked the naval officer, who looked to be easily in his fiftieth year.

From his bronzed complexion he had evidently seen service on foreign stations.

"That, sir, is Fort Lafayette," replied the artilleryman, removing his pipe and glancing with interest at the stranger.

"Fort Lafayette!" cried the officer, in surprise. "I would never have imagined it."

"And yet you belong to the American navy," said the soldier.

"That is true. But I happen to be a Southerner by birth, and, strange as it may appear, this is my first visit to New York. I've heard a good deal about Fort Lafayette and the Narrows, but this, I may say, is the first time I've seen either."

"Is it, now? D'ye know, 'twas only yesterday we had two gentlemen here who were sayin' the very same thing," and the artilleryman gazed pensively over at the dismantled structure, which carried so many bitter as well as glorious memories with it.

"Indeed!" remarked the officer. "Two gentlemen, you say?"

"Yes, sir, and they, like yourself, didn't seem to know anything at all about the old fort."

"I dare say you gave them an interesting account of it," replied the officer, suppressing a yawn.

"That I did, sir. I pointed out Fort Wadsworth there, across the Narrows, and I told them how a few of our modern shells would lay Lafayette in a heap of ruins in no time at all."

"That must have impressed them."

"You're right it did. They wanted to see what kind of a lookin' shop the old fort was inside."

"What did you say to that?" asked the naval officer.

"I said that by hirin' a boat they could go over and look fer themselves."

"Did they follow your suggestion?"

"That I don't know, sir. The bugle from the fort sounded just then, and I was obliged to leave them, while they went on down the road."

"Down the road, did you say?" asked the officer, sharply.

"I call it down," returned the soldier, "it was off Langworthy Hall way."

A strange gleam came into the naval officer's eye at this.

It passed unnoticed, however, by the soldier.

"I think," said the naval officer, after a pause, "that I should like to take a look at the old fort."

As he was speaking an old man could be seen coming up the crazy stairway from the landing place.

"Ye would?" exclaimed the old soldier. "Well, d'ye see that man a-comin' up those steps? Well, that's Garret Cochran. He'll row you out there."

"He will, eh? I'll see if I can make a dicker with him."

They watched the old boatman as he hobbled up the wooden stairway.

Finally he reached the top and stopped to regain his breath.

"Come here, Garry," hailed the artilleryman.

Cochran was deaf and short-sighted, but that shout went with him.

When he got near enough to see the naval officer he saluted in true naval style.

A bargain was quickly made whereby the boatman agreed to row the naval officer to the ruins and back for one dollar.

On the way out the naval officer easily won his way into the old man's good graces.

"Do you row many visitors out to the fort?" he asked, casually, as they neared the ruins.

"Oh, yes. They's quite a few visits the old place. I tuk two parties out only yestiddy."

"You did, indeed? Were they strangers, too?"

"Well, the party I tuk out in the mornin' wuzn't. An old gent and his daughter from N' York, they wuz, and I guess the gal put him up to it."

"And the other party."

"They wuz two gents who hed never seen the old fort before. They tuk a mighty keen interest in it, too."

They were now within a few feet of the island.

"Just git aholt o' thet beam there, will ye? Thet's right," and with a skillful twist of the oar the old boatman brought the boat alongside the landing.

The boatman's remark, coupled with the story of the old soldier, had been enough to put Nick on the alert.

There was something about what he had heard that he did not like.

His eye peered into every crevice as he walked through the old structure.

Recent footprints could be seen here and there, but they were so irregular that no single footprint could be distinguished from the others.

The old boatman followed the naval officer about, pointing out this and that feature of interest.

One action of the naval officer's, however, escaped his notice entirely.

About six or seven paces from one of the portholes he gave a quick glance at the boatman.

Seeing his back was turned momentarily, he quickly stooped and picked up a soiled and crumpled slip of note paper that was lying there.

It was half hidden by a large stone.

Without saying anything to his companion he slipped it into his pocket.

They emerged from the passage they were in and started down another.

This was the last one, for they had seen all the others.

It was also much darker than the others.

The boatman went first, the naval officer following.

They had taken but a few steps when a slight noise behind them caused them both to start.

Before the naval officer could look around, he received a stunning blow.

It was from some soft, but heavy instrument. He was sent reeling to the wall.

Another blow with the same weapon stretched him senseless on the ground.

His companion was too stupefied to run or speak.

He stood there spellbound.

Before him were two men, carefully masked. As he eyed them, petrified with terror, one of them leveled a revolver at his head.

"Old boy, you can just make yourself scarce. And if you breathe a word of what you have seen here today, you'll wake up the next morning a corpse!"

The old fellow now needed no second invitation.

Fear lent speed to his legs.

He reached his boat in incredibly short time.

Springing in, he picked up an oar and tore loose the painter at the same time.

Another minute and he was pulling for the shore as if his life depended upon every stroke.

CHAPTER VII.

THE LOST LETTER.

As has been seen, Nick did not entirely lose consciousness at the first blow of his assailant.

In the brief space of time that elapsed before he was again struck, he realized that he had run into a veritable death trap.

Then came the blow that stretched him unconscious in the dark corridor.

When he came to all was pitch dark around him.

At first he did not realize what had happened.

Then as his wits slowly returned he remembered the attack.

He felt of his hands, and to his surprise they were not bound.

Neither were his feet.

His head felt numb, and, when he rubbed it, he felt two lumps, evidently made by the slungshot.

But where was he?

This was the question he now asked himself.

He groped around and soon came in contact with a wall.

It was moist and slimy.

As he groped on he realized that the wall was circular.

It seemed as if he were in a well.

He looked up, but all was darkness above him.

No, not quite all.

A small circle of light, no larger than a silver dollar, appeared in the center of the covering, or whatever it was.

It seemed to Nick to be about ten feet above him.

How to get up there was the next question.

He reached in his pocket and found his matches and a small candle he always carried with him.

So his assailants had not even searched him.

This reminded Nick of the note he had found, and he reached into his side pocket, fully expecting, at any rate, to find that missing.

But the crumpled paper was there and still rolled up, just as he had found it.

He lost no time in lighting his candle.

As the dim glow half lit up the place he was in, he realized now where he was.

It was one of the old fort's sunken vaults, where in former times was stored the ammunition, both for the fort itself and for many of the ships of the navy.

One glance at the smooth walls was enough to show Nick that it would be impossible for him to get out unless he had outside aid.

His thoughts then turned to his captors.

Who were they?

Were they connected with the Langworthy murder?

Or had he unwittingly encountered old foes who happened to be at the ruined fort and had recognized him?

Perhaps the ruins were the rendezvous of a gang of crooks.

If they were the murderers of Col. Langworthy, it seemed strange to him that they should have risked capture by remaining so long in the neighborhood.

Natural caution would lead them to get as far away as possible.

And yet Nick could not shake the feeling that their trail and that left by the murderers of Col. Langworthy were destined to run close together, if, indeed, they were not one and the same. Nick now spread out the crumpled note on his knee.

There was some writing on it, much blurred, but yet decipherable with the aid of his small magnifying glass.

The dim light shone on his face as he read.

It could be seen from his expression of keen interest that he had discovered something important.

In fact, at that very moment, the owner of the letter would have given half he possessed to get hold of it.

It read as follows:

"It is time you made some restitution for your wrongdoing.

"You have brought ruin on my family by your dishonest dealings, greed and malice.

"The wealth which you have by right belongs to us—my sisters, brothers and myself.

"While pretending to be my father's friend, you betrayed your trust and we are the sufferers.

"I ask you now to return every dollar which you have stolen, for this is the most charitable word by which I can describe your management of our affairs.

"I warn you that you had better do so; not that I care much for the money itself, but I must see justice done for my family's sake.

"Besides, I have sworn to be even with you, even at the risk of life, and shall think nothing of sacrificing yours if you do not come to immediate terms.

"Comply with these terms, or as sure as your name is Col. Langworthy, you will meet the fate you richly merit. HARRY GRAY."

There was no date on the missive.

From the appearance of the ink, however, it had been written some time before.

The paper, however, was but little weather-beaten.

This showed that the note had not been lying long in the place where Nick found it.

To explain Nick's predicament and the finding of the important letter, it will be necessary to follow the murderers of Col. Langworthy after they had accomplished their deadly work.

They had driven but a short distance from the Hall when the driver pulled up as suddenly as he had started.

"Here you are, mates," he said, in a low voice, turning in his seat.

When the hack stopped, the two men got out.

While one carried the iron-bound box, the other bore a pick, shovel and an unlighted lantern.

The latter led the way down the wooden stairway to the old pier.

A flat-bottom boat was drawn out of the bushes some distance down the beach.

It had been hired from an oyster fisherman on the opposite side of the bay.

One of the men had rowed it over unobserved early in the evening.

They quickly put off, and soon reached Fort Lafayette.

Here they disembarked.

As they passed inside the fort the one carrying the box remarked:

"Don't imagine for a moment, Seabury, that I am going to carry it all here. We will take one package with us. It will be enough to supply our wants for a year to come."

"And then, Gray?"

"Then we can return and dig up the box. I tell you it is the only way to throw the detectives off."

His companion said no more.

Once inside the fort the dull sounds of pick and shovel could be heard for twenty minutes.

When they came forth it was without the iron-bound box.

They pulled back the way they had come, and landed the boat in the bushes.

Then they went up the crazy stairs.

Three minutes later they were driving furiously toward Fulton Street, Brooklyn.

The man who had carried the box had extracted from it before it was interred one of the big packages of bank notes.

It amounted to close on twenty thousand dollars.

This package of bank bills was to keep them going until such time as they could safely return to Fort Hamilton and disinter the treasure from the old fort.

But they were fated to go no farther than New York, where they had put up at a hotel several days previous to the murder.

Arriving at Fulton Street, they gave the cabman a magnificent fee for his night's work—more than he could have earned in three months.

Then they bent their steps toward the Bridge.

A little way before you come to the Bridge is an old, ramshackle building.

Into this structure the two men disappeared.

When they emerged, half an hour later, neither the artilleryman nor the lodgekeeper's wife would have known them; as the same men who had spoken to them the previous afternoon.

They entered the old building as brunettes.

They came out blondes.

"Now to go back to the Hotel Bartholdi," said Gray, "and get what little baggage we have."

"Those were bang-up disguises we wore."

"Yes. Our most intimate friends wouldn't have recognized us. What old Scotti knows about disguises would fill a book."

"Well, it ought to, seeing he has been in the business many years."

"He's a thorough artist. But what nerves you must have, Gray!"

"Why?" asked the other, with uplifted brows.

"Old Langworthy's death doesn't appear to weigh heavily on you, at all?"

"Why should it? Or rather, why should I allow it?" Gray demanded, grimly.

"Come now. Do you really feel no reaction now that you have done for the old man?"

"Sh-h-h, you fool," hissed Gray, half angrily. "It's too dangerous a subject to discuss here on the street. Who knows who may hear you."

"True enough," answered Seabury. "But after the Bartholdi, where?"

"The West."

"Why were you thinking of the West?"

"Because it will be safer till this thing blows over. Then we can return and dig up our treasure."

So it was decided that they should go to Denver and stay there for a few months, at least.

"Say five or six months," put in Seabury.

"Yes. That will give time for the whole affair to die down," returned Gray.

As he spoke he reached into his side pocket, in which were several time-tables.

They were of both Southern and Western railroads.

Suddenly a blank look overspread his face.

He hastily felt in another pocket, then in still another.

He had stopped now, and his cheeks paled perceptibly.

"What is it?" asked Seabury, noticing his friend's strange behavior.

"That letter," cried Gray, hoarsely.

"What letter?"

"That note I found in Langworthy's room. I put it in this pocket."

"Can't you find it?"

"It's—gone!" exclaimed Gray. "My God, man, if anybody finds that, we're lost!"

"What! Was it the letter you threatened him with?" asked Seabury, excited now in his turn.

"Curses on it! I must have it here somewhere," exclaimed Gray, ignoring the other's question, and again searching his pockets more carefully.

But it was no use.

The letter had disappeared!

"I took off my coat at the old fort," said Gray, slowly, with knitted brows. "Fool that I was, it must have fallen out there."

"Curse you, Gray. I warned you to destroy it," burst out Seabury, angrily.

"Shut up, will you? What has that to do with it now? We must go back and hunt for that letter—and find it!"

"Not to-night?"

"Yes, to-night. No—I—don't—dare," he added, in a hollow voice, as if speaking to himself.

"Nor do I," said his companion, gruffly.

"But we can't go away till we get it. It must be to-morrow without fail, and we'll start from the Staten Island side."

So it was decided that they should return to Fort Lafayette the next afternoon, as near dusk as possible, dig up the treasure, abstract the contents, and drop the iron-bound box into the bay.

Meanwhile, they rode across the Bridge and boarded a Broadway car to take them uptown.

Arriving at the hotel, where they had registered under assumed names, they were shown all the deference the most favored guests would receive.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE OLD AMMUNITION VAULT.

The next day Gray and Seabury visited the old fort, as has been seen.

They arrived but a few minutes before Nick Carter and the old boatman.

Indeed, if the ruins had not been in the way, Nick would have seen them land at about the time he was putting off from shore.

They had scarcely commenced the search for the telltale note before the sound of the old boatman's oars reached their ears.

They quickly sprang into hiding.

Peering through a crevice, they saw the naval officer land, followed by the boatman.

Who he was, they did not imagine.

Their only concern was that he might come across the marks they had left after burying the box. They had left as few traces as possible, and both felt confident they would not be discovered.

They would keep a close watch of the two visitors, however.

After they left they would proceed with their work.

It was soon apparent that the naval officer was making a careful inspection of the fort.

He was no doubt under government orders to look over the place.

But this did not add to the two watchers' peace of mind.

If the naval officer looked over every nook and cranny as rigidly as he was inspecting the first, the chances were all in favor of his finding out their secret.

Finally the old boatman led him into the very corridor they were in.

Before he did so, the officer was hidden for an instant by a projecting wall.

It was here he picked up the note, as already related.

The watchers now secreted themselves behind some masonry with their hearts in their mouths.

At the end of the corridor was the buried box.

On came the old boatman, talking volubly.

He was explaining how this particular corridor, which seemed to come to an end, really opened out into the main section of the fort.

A heavy iron door intervened.

The officer was asking many questions, which showed he intended to pass by the very spot where the treasure was secreted.

As soon as he passed the two watchers' hiding place, Gray arose to his feet from a crouching attitude. In his hand was a murderous-looking slungshot. Silently he crept up the dark passage.

Thud!

The slungshot descended with fearful force.

If Nick had remained where he was, that blow would have been sufficient.

But he had heard his assailant in time to turn his head a trifle.

The result was he received a glancing blow.

Before he could recover, however, he was again struck.

As has been seen, this did the business.

After the old boatman had fled, Nick's assailants stared at the prostrate body an instant in silence.

"Have you killed him?" whispered Seabury, at last.

"I guess not," returned Gray, bending over the officer. "No, it wasn't a fatal blow, and he's breathing."

"What will we do with him?"

"If we can find that note and dig up the money in short order, we won't need to do anything with him."

"But the old boatman?"

"He won't dare to blab. And if he does, we'll be far away from here before he gets over his fright and gives the alarm."

"Well, come on, then."

"No. You watch him and I'll do the searching. If he shows signs of coming to, call me."

As Gray spoke he noticed a revolver protruding from the naval officer's pocket.

He took the precaution of removing it.

Being a soldier, it was not to be wondered at that he carried a weapon.

Gray now commenced a careful search for the note. It was taking him longer than he anticipated.

During his search he happened to discover a sunken vault, about ten feet deep.

In fact, he came near falling into it.

As he passed by it, he was startled to hear his companion calling to him.

The naval officer was recovering his senses.

It occurred to Gray that the vault would be an excellent place to hold the officer.

He would not interrupt them there, and time was growing short.

While Gray seized the insensible man's arms, Seabury grasped his feet.

Thus they bore him to the vault.

He was let down carefully, feet foremost.

The two men had no desire to injure him any more than they could help.

After letting go of him, they moved a large stone slab over the opening.

It was originally intended as a cover for the vault and had a round hole in the center of it, where an iron ring had formerly been.

They now started back toward the corridor.

Gray took the precaution of looking toward shore to see if the old boatman had reached the pier.

He started back with a cry of rage.

"Come on, Seabury! We're in for it now."

Seabury sprang toward the opening.

"You're right," he cried, excitedly. "The old sea dog has given the alarm!"

Gray was running toward the other side of the fort.

"Come on, come on," he cried, turning as he ran and beckoning to his companion.

As Seabury reached the spot where their boat was hidden, Gray was already pushing it out.

"Jump in!" he cried, "and grab these oars! Keep the fort between us and the pier."

The next instant they were in the stream, headed toward the opposite shore.

The fort hid the pier from their view.

If they could have seen it, they would have observed half a dozen rowboats push out toward the fort, almost simultaneously.

When they reached the ruins the old boatman led them rapidly along to the scene of the assault.

To their surprise no trace could be found of either the wounded man or his assailants.

Some were inclined to doubt the old boatman's story.

They searched the entire ruins without discovering a trace of any living being.

Many of the searchers passed close to the vault where Nick Carter still lay in a stupor.

As it happened, Gray had scattered some small stones over the slab, and it looked as if it had not been touched in years.

Others looked out into the Narrows to see if any one had taken flight in that direction.

Two or three rowboats could be seen, two headed toward the city and one headed down the bay.

All were moving along leisurely.

And none had apparently more than one occupant.

The old boatman was the most puzzled man in the crowd.

"Cochran's gone bughouse!" laughed one of the men, with a sly wink at his companion.

This brought out a laugh all around.

"Say, Garret," called one old fellow, "what did you have to drink, to-day?"

"Must have been something strong," added a third, nettled at the result of the adventure.

"You fellers can laugh all ye want to," cried Cochran, his old eyes flashing. "But if ye'll explain to me what bekim o' thet naval officer——"

The old boatman nodded his head vigorously as he tried to think what he would do if they could explain that circumstance.

It certainly was a poser.

"Swimmin's good," remarked a young chap, "and

the tide's comin' in. When he seen himself deserted he may have struck out for shore. It ain't far, and we wasn't any on us lookin' out yonder."

And he pointed to the course a swimmer would be compelled to take to reach shore.

This was the opinion of several of the others.

"Like as not we'll find him on the pier when we gets back," said several.

With this they started back to their boats.

The old boatman followed slowly.

He took pains, however, not to be the last to leave.

He knew what he had seen, and his grizzled face wore a troubled look as he reluctantly got into his boat and picked up the oars.

CHAPTER IX.

PATSY SEES A BOAT.

As the last boat left the fort, another boat on the opposite side of the Narrows was drawing swiftly inshore.

Where one figure had been seen in it, there were now two figures.

The second occupant was not rowing, but seemed to be crouching in the stern.

He now arose to a sitting posture, giving a hoarse chuckle as he did so.

"It's easy to fool a lot of idiots," he exclaimed, contemptuously.

"We turned the trick in neat manner that time, Gray, and no mistake," returned the other. "Apparently they didn't even find the naval gent."

"They didn't, eh? Well, I wish they had. He's likely to go without his supper if they don't."

"We're safe, anyway."

"You're right we are. And we've got to play cagey for a few days, too, if we expect to get that boodle."

It was apparent from this that they did not intend to revisit the ruins in a hurry.

In that case, they were willing to leave their helpless prisoner to his fate.

They apparently saw nothing cruel in this act of barbarism.

And yet, even while they were congratulating each other on their narrow escape, there were two pairs of eyes that were watching their every movement.

They belonged to Chick and Patsy, Nick Carter's clever assistants.

Chick and Patsy had started out shortly after Nick.

They were to approach Langworthy Hall from the opposite direction to the way taken by their chief.

Nick's detective instinct had told him, when he first read Maj. Scannel's note, that some one on the outside had committed the crime.

This being so, it was important to learn who had been seen near Langworthy Hall immediately previous to the murder.

Patsy was to accompany Chick, and, if they should strike a trail that needed to be followed up, Patsy was to set out on it, while Chick kept on to a certain shore at Fort Hamilton where Nick had agreed to meet him.

The chances were that the murderers had approached Langworthy Hall by the most infrequented route.

Nick acted on this chance, although he knew at the same time that one of the easiest methods of throwing off suspicion is to work to a great extent "in the open."

Indeed, Nick often judged the cleverness of his quarry in this manner.

In this instant it has been seen that the exception proved the rule.

And Nick's respect for the men he was after rose accordingly.

By the time Chick and Patsy reached the lodgegates of Langworthy Hall, without making a discovery, they became pretty certain that Nick had struck something on the way he had gone.

"We'll just have a talk with the lodgekeeper, Patsy, and then we'll see what's doing with Nick."

"I'm with you, Chick. But say, what a sell it would be if Nick hasn't anything either."

"Don't you worry, boy. If Nick hasn't unearthed a clew, he'll manufacture one."

They were now close to the lodge.

Neither detective was more than slightly disguised.

They appeared to be residents in the neighborhood, out to take a look at the forts and harbor.

In answer to their summons the lodgekeeper's wife appeared at the door. Her husband was behind her.

She had been crying evidently, for her eyes were red and swollen.

Both detectives knew well what had caused her weeping, and so respected her grief.

Chick turned toward her husband, saying:

"This is Langworthy Hall, is it not?"

"Yes, sir," answered the lodgekeeper, eying the detectives keenly.

"Well, we are expecting a friend at our home further up the road. He said he would stop and call on Col.

Longworthy on the way. Can you tell me whether he has been here yet?"

"Was he in a carriage?" asked the lodgekeeper.

"No, he had a wheel," answered Chick, blandly.

"I haven't seen him then," said the lodgekeeper. "But part of the time I was up at the Hall. Did you see any one, Kate?" and he turned to his wife.

"This afternoon?" she repeated. "No one as I know of."

Chick turned toward Patsy, and said so that the lodgekeeper could hear:

"You don't suppose he mistook the day, Walter, do you?"

"It doesn't seem possible," returned Patsy. "If Clarence came up yesterday he found no one at home."

"Yesterday?" echoed the lodgekeeper's wife, paling. "There was a stranger here yesterday, but he had no bicycle."

The lodgekeeper now turned toward his wife.

"You didn't tell me of this, Kate," he said. "This may be——"

He checked himself, suddenly.

"What kind of a looking man was he?" asked Chick, quickly.

The woman gave an accurate description of Harry Gray.

"Did he go up to the Hall?"

"No."

"Are you sure of that?"

"Yes. I watched the man go down the road, until he turned that bend there," and she pointed toward Fort Hamilton.

The lodgekeeper tried to get his wife's attention to give her a warning glance.

Chick saw this and redoubled his efforts to get her attention.

"Did he say he would return later?"

"Yes, sir. At least I understood him to say so."

"And he didn't return?"

"No, sir."

"Did you notice any other man with him?"

"No. He was alone."

"I doubt, Walter," said Chick, turning toward Patsy again, "if that could have been Clarence.

"We thank you, anyway, for your information," he added, addressing the lodgekeeper, and lifting their hats, the two detectives passed on toward Fort Hamilton.

"Well, that is something gained," remarked Chick, when they were well out of hearing.

"But you lied like a society woman to get it!" laughed Patsy.

They were some distance from the landing where Nick had embarked for Fort Lafayette, when they espied a group of excited men, pointing out toward the ruins and engaged in an animated discussion.

"Hello, there's something doing there," exclaimed Chick, "or I've got another guess coming."

They hurried forward and soon learned the cause of the excitement.

Garret Cochran's story of the strange assault had created a tremendous sensation.

All eyes were on the fort where the old boatman and twenty volunteers were searching for the victim and his assailants.

All except Patsy's.

His keen sight had espied a rowboat making with all speed for the opposite shore.

He noticed that it contained two persons.

Even as he looked, to his surprise the boat was turned down-stream, and the rower almost ceased his violent efforts.

At the same instant one of the occupants seemed to disappear.

"Say, Chick," he remarked, "get on to the dory out yonder. A moment ago there were two persons in it, and the guy with the oars was pulling like the old Harry for Staten Island."

"Well, what of it?"

"Well, see him now. He looks as if he's out on a Sunday-school picnic, and the other chap must have drowned himself."

"Perhaps he's seasick," suggested Chick, and turned his attention again to the fort.

Presently the boats were seen returning.

"Come on down to the pier, Patsy."

"You go, Chick. I'll wait for you up here," answered the young detective, his eyes never leaving the little boat out in the Narrows.

As Chick reached the pier, Garret Cochran's words were the first that reached his ears.

"I tell ye, boys, I know what I seen," he was saying. "Ye said we would find the naval officer when we got back. Well, is he here?"

The mention of a naval officer caused Chick to p.ick up his ears.

That was the disguise Nick had started out in, as he knew.

He stepped quickly forward and made several pointed inquiries.

The story was soon told.

A feeling of murderous rage took possession of Chick as he realized his chief's peril.

Then he thought of Patsy and the boat he had seen.

Getting a brief description of the two men who had attacked the old boatman, he surprised them all by suddenly brushing by them.

He fairly leaped up the stairs.

Three steps were taken at a time.

"Don't let your eyes leave that boat, Patsy," he cried, hoarsely, long before he had reached the top.

"I've got it spotted, Chick. It's nearly to shore now. What's up?"

"They've got Nick!" cried Chick, breathless.

"What do you mean?"

Chick told him in the fewest possible words.

"Now show me that boat, Patsy," finished Chick, casting an anxious glance toward the opposite shore.

Patsy pointed out the dory, now nearly hidden by the shore.

"We can never get them, Chick," cried Patsy, beside himself with excitement. "Do you think they have Nick with them?"

"I don't know, boy. There's some lightning work ahead of us, wherever he is. I'm sure he's in danger, or we should have heard from him."

"What's your plan?"

"Chase yourself up to the Battery, just as fast as you can get there," ordered Chick, and his words were crisp and clear now. "Watch every Staten Island boat that arrives. If these men are aboard, stick to them like a leech. You have their descriptions. Send word to the office as soon as you have shadowed them to their lair—or—"

"And you?" asked Patsy, rapidly buttoning his coat, warm as was the day, and pulling down his hat.

"I'm off on the track of that boat. If they have Nick with them, it will be easy. If not—God help him—and them," muttered Chick, and his teeth were clinched with sudden determination. "Now scoot!"

CHAPTER X.

TO THE RESCUE.

Patsy needed no second word.

He was off like a flash.

As he sped around the corner Chick dashed again down the stairs.

Thrusting a five-dollar note into the old boatman's hands he sprang into one of the boats fastened to the pier.

His coat was stripped in a twinkling.

He slid his suspenders from his shoulders with one movement.

Then he bent to his oars with all the strength he possessed.

The crowd on shore watched his movements with surprise.

This was quickly followed by admiration as they saw the boat fairly jump forward under his powerful strokes.

The veins on his forehead stood out like whipcords, and the outlines of his superb muscles were plainly visible through his clothing.

A magnificent specimen of manhood, Chick's splendid physique was now seen at its best.

The oar blades struck the water with clock work precision.

Past Fort Lafayette sped the boat.

Beads of perspiration gathered on Chick's forehead and slowly trickled down his cheeks.

Still he rowed on and on, while the boat fairly creaked under the fearful pressure.

Once in midstream he looked toward the shore he was approaching.

He had fastened the place in his mind where the boat he was pursuing had last appeared.

He noticed with a cry of satisfaction that he was headed almost directly for it.

Nearer, ever nearer, sped the boat.

The next time Chick looked around he was but a few rods from shore.

Several flat-bottom boats were drawn up near a boathouse.

Before this sat a grizzled little man, evidently the owner of the boats.

With unabated speed Chick rowed on until he was almost up to the landing.

"Hi, there. Look where you're goin', will ye?" shouted the boatman, springing to his feet.

The words were not out of his mouth when Chick

plunged his oars into the water and held them there as in a vise.

Thump!

The bow of the boat struck the landing with a thud that would have sent its occupant sprawling had he not been prepared for it.

Chick held to his seat.

He attempted to speak, but his tongue clove to the roof of his mouth.

It was fully half a minute before he could catch his breath.

He was out of the boat by this time.

Thrusting the painter into the boatman's hand, he gasped:

"Those men!"

"Well, what about them, my friend? Just hold on a minute. You're winded!"

"Where did they go?" shouted Chick, while his fingers closed around the boatman's arm until he winced.

If the boatman had contemplated deceiving Chick, he changed his mind instantly.

There was something about the murderous jaw of the man before him that showed he would stand no trifling.

"If you mean the two men that rowed over here a few minutes ago——"

"Two? Did you say two men?"

"That's all there was, mate. What are you driving at?" and the boatman eyed his visitor as if he began to suspect he had a madman to deal with.

Chick noticed his look and broke into a harsh laugh. He had partially recovered his breath by this time.

"See here, my man," and Chick let go his hold while he mopped his hot face. "I followed a boat over here from Fort Hamilton. You saw me?"

"Yes."

"And you saw the boat that came from the same direction ahead of me. It stopped in the middle of the Narrows a while, and then—came—here!"

"Yes."

"Now tell me the truth, my friend. It is a matter of life and death. Were there two or three men in that boat?"

"There were only two, I tell ye. Couldn't you see that for yourself."

It was evident the man was not lying.

"There were only two sitting. That I know," said Chick. "The question is, was a third person lying in the bottom of the boat?"

"No, I'll take my oath on that. There's the very boat they came in. They hired it an hour ago. They seemed in quite a hurry when they got here, and made off up the road without wasting any time."

Chick stepped quickly over to the boat the old man pointed out.

It needed but a hasty examination to show him that only two persons had occupied it.

Chick arose to his feet slowly now.

The flush that had followed his vigorous exercise gave way to a deep pallor.

"Where can Nick be, then?" he muttered, half aloud.

The boatman eyed him curiously, as he staggered to his boat like a drunken man.

"I'm much obliged to you," he said, simply, tossing the boatman half a dollar, which the latter eagerly caught.

"Thank 'ee," said the little fellow. "What's the trouble, if I may ask? Hev ye misconnected with one of your friends?"

"That's just about it," replied Chick, and once more he slipped the oars into the locks. "And there's a fearful reckoning coming to whoever broke the connection," and he shuddered, in spite of himself.

He rowed away slowly, his thoughts busy over the turn affairs had taken.

"Well, it has come to either one of two things," he muttered, grimly. "Nick is either a prisoner at the ruined fort or else—he is at the bottom of the bay."

It was with a heavy heart that Chick approached the landing at Fort Lafayette.

His heart sank still lower as he passed slowly through the deserted corridors.

When he emerged from the last one, he stood quite still a moment.

Little did he suspect that not ten feet away from him were sixty thousand dollars in greenbacks.

"I can't believe Nick has gone under," he said, aloud, and his voice sounded strange in the old fort. "I can't——"

Hark!

Was that a voice?

Perhaps it was the echo of his own?

Chick stood alert a moment.

Ha! He heard it again, on his right.

It seemed to come from the bowels of the earth.

Chick moved nearer the wall.

The next instant he started as if he had received a powerful electric shock.

Faintly as though from the grave itself, but still clear and distinct, came the words:

"Fools and idiots! You couldn't find a house and let if it stood before you. I'll thrash the first man that pulls me out of here. Send me Chick and Patsy. They are worth the whole confounded lot of you. They——"

"Nick!" screamed Chick, bounding forward. "For God's sake, Nick, where are you?"

"Where am I? Have I been shouting at you people for two mortal hours, and you've just heard me?"

The sounds came from farther along the wall, and Chick hurriedly made his way in that direction.

"Hello, Nick!" he shouted again.

"There's a voice I know. Chick, my boy. Look for the ammunition vault," came back in muffled sounds.

At the same instant Chick spotted the slab, almost hidden beneath the loose stones.

It was the work of a second to sweep it clear of stones and raise it on edge.

"Thank God!" he exclaimed. "Nick, I thought they had done for you."

"Now, Chick, you know better than that. Just hand me the end of your coat."

Chick stripped off his coat and let it down to Nick.

After that he had his chief out of the vault in a jiffy.

He grasped him by the shoulders as he helped him up over the edge.

Then he fairly hugged Nick in the excess of his joy.

It was one of the happiest moments of the young detective's life.

CHAPTER XI.

NICK'S DISCOVERY.

An hour later the two detectives were still inside the old fort.

Nick had shown Chick the telltale letter he had found.

Chick, on his part, had fully described his adventures.

Nick heartily approved of his assistant's move in sending Patsy up to the Battery.

He thought, as did Chick, that there was strong probability of Patsy's striking the trail of the men they were after.

"Now," continued Nick, "to come to the secret of the whole plot. What do you think Fort Lafayette has to do with it, Chick?"

"Well," replied Chick, "it seems to me they were forced to come here to escape discovery on the way back to the city. They have been here ever since waiting for a chance to get away."

"Then you think they knocked me out simply because I was likely to discover them?"

"That's it," nodded Chick, "although they took you simply for a naval officer."

"You're wrong there, my boy. The old boatman and I would never have discovered them in the wide world if they had just lain low."

"Do you think so?"

"Decidedly. No, Chick, they were not afraid we would find somebody. They were afraid we would find something!"

Chick started.

"What do you mean?"

"You remember the threat in that letter if old Col. Langworthy did not pay up?"

"He threatened to kill him!" replied Chick.

"But he says the wealth you have taken away by right belong to us."

"Yes."

"Well, doesn't it seem likely to you they froze to whatever was lying loose about the house."

"But——"

"And I happen to know that Col. Langworthy never banked."

"Ha!" cried Chick. "Then you think they brought it here?"

"Undoubtedly. Somewhere about these ruins is Col. Langworthy's treasure."

"But what made them stay here, then, after they had buried it?"

"I don't think they did," answered Nick. "I can't tell exactly why they did come back, but if I'm any judge, they lost this note when they were hiding their plunder. Later on they missed it and came back here to find it."

"Nick, you are certainly a wonder. Nothing escapes you!" exclaimed Chick, in open admiration.

"Well, my boy, I had time enough to think it over down there in that vault. But now to business. We must find that money, if it is here."

"Where shall we look first."

"At the place I was struck down," decided Nick,

quickly. "I think I was 'very hot,' as we boys used to say, when I turned into that corridor."

Both detectives searched through the corridor carefully.

No sign of the slightest disturbance of the ground could be seen.

"Here, let's open this big door," suggested Chick.

He seized the rusty old knob as he spoke.

Giving the iron door a vigorous pull, it creaked open.

"Why, this leads right back to where we started from," commenced Chick.

"And also opens up an avenue of investigation," added Nick, kneeling down and examining the ground in front of him.

"Do you see anything?" asked Chick, quickly.

"Take a look for yourself, Chick."

Chick did so.

Sure enough, the ground there had recently been disturbed; that was perfectly evident.

The detectives now scraped away the soil, using two jagged pieces of stone for the purpose.

They had made a hole less than two feet deep when, suddenly, Chick struck something hard.

Brushing the dirt away with his fingers, he uncovered what seemed to be the end of a box.

Then an iron handle was exposed.

A grim smile played about Nick's lips as he told Chick to hoist away.

It took several tugs to get the box free.

Finally, however, Chick pulled it from its resting place.

"Well, I don't know," he said, with a smile, as he unfastened the catch and found that it was unlocked.

He pulled the cover up and there, exposed to their gaze, were many neat bundles of bank notes.

"What will we do with them?" asked Chick, after a pause.

"Chick, I've got an idea," said Nick. "We'll take those bank bills out, stuff something else in their place, and bury the box again just as we found it."

"And use it as a trap?" exclaimed Chick, seeing his chief's plan.

"You've struck it the first time," said Nick.

His plan was followed to the letter.

When the two detectives left the spot a little later, there was nothing to show that any one had tampered with the ground, except the few traces by which they discovered the spot.

It was fast growing dark now.

They shut the iron door and left everything just as they had found it.

Everything, that is, except the bank notes.

These they tied up in an old piece of canvas that was lying near.

Then they deposited them in the boat.

"One more thing," said Nick. "Our friend who accompanied me out here must not know that I have come to life."

"You're afraid it will interfere with our plans?" asked Chick.

"Yes. We cannot afford to have the old fellow know anything more about me. Enough damage has been done as it is, although everything has not turned against us," said Nick, with a smile.

Thus it was that when Chick returned to the pier at Fort Hamilton he was alone.

He had deposited Nick further on down the beach.

The old boatman sympathized with Chick when he saw him return from his apparently fruitless errand.

Chick thanked him and got away as quickly as he could.

He rejoined Nick, carrying the canvas bundle under his arm, on the Fort Hamilton road.

A few minutes later they were speeding in the elevated cars toward the Brooklyn Bridge.

CHAPTER XII.

PATSY'S TEN-STRIKE.

Patsy lost no time in getting to the Battery.

The shortest way from Fort Hamilton is by the Thirty-ninth Street, Brooklyn, ferry.

This lands you quickly at the Battery, alongside the slip where the Staten Island boats come in.

Patsy took this route.

Within forty minutes he was at his destination.

This was better time than the men he was after could make if they came that way.

It seemed more than probable they would, because, apparently, they had nothing to fear.

They had thrown their pursuers, they thought, completely off the track.

When the next ferryboat arrived from Staten Island Patsy seated himself and scrutinized the features of the passengers closely.

The boat was not crowded, as most of the people were going the other way.

He saw several men that answered closely to the

description given by Chick, but none that tallied exactly.

A few minutes later another boat arrived with the same result.

Finally, on the arrival of the third boat, Patsy saw two men pass out that caused him to start.

They passed close to him.

Patsy's eyes were flashing now.

Their appearance corresponded perfectly with Chick's description.

Patsy left his hiding place and followed the two men out of the ferryhouse.

This he could easily do without attracting attention, for the passage was fairly full of people.

He saw them go upstairs to the elevated road and pass through to the Third Avenue platform.

A train was waiting, ready to start.

The men took seats in the second car.

When the train started, half a minute later, Patsy was in the third car.

The South Ferry branch of the Third Avenue "L" winds in and out among the downtown streets like a snake.

After passing under the Brooklyn Bridge the way is a little more straight.

It leads through Chatham Square, nearby the famous Chinese district, thence up the Bowery and into Third Avenue at Fourth Street.

When Fourteenth Street was reached the men started out.

Patsy, however, was on the station platform when they alighted.

He went down the stairs in front of the men.

When he reached the street he stood on the corner a moment as if debating whether he would go up or down.

The two men gave him only a casual glance as they passed him.

They walked rapidly toward Broadway.

Patsy was not far behind.

Turning into the Bartholdi Hotel, they asked for their key and stepped into the elevator.

Patsy knew the clerk well.

"Good-evening, Slattery," said the young detective, stepping up to the desk.

"Hello, my boy," called out the clerk, cheerily. "What's doing that brings you over here?"

"Oh, nothing much," was the reply. "Say, have you any rooms to spare?"

"Sure thing. How many?" and the clerk smiled good-naturedly.

"Just one to-night, Slattery. By the way, did you notice the two men who came in just now?"

"Why, yes. They've just gone up to their room."

"What number is it?"

"Fifty-seven, I think. Yes, that's right," he added, consulting the key boxes. "Why do you ask about them?"

"Well, I might as well tell you. The chief wants them spotted, as they may turn out to be important witnesses in a certain case we're working up."

"I'm glad it's nothing more serious, Patsy."

"So am I. Can you give me a room that adjoins fifty-seven?"

"Up to some eavesdropping, eh?"

"Oh, not especially. I want to keep close to them, though."

"Well, both fifty-five and fifty-nine are adjoining rooms. Fifty-five is engaged, but I can let you have fifty-nine."

"That will do first rate," said Patsy. "Do you know how long these men have been here?"

"Let's see. This is Tuesday. They came last Friday night."

Patsy turned to the register.

As he turned to Friday's arrivals, the clerk ran his pencil down the list.

"There they are," he said. "They are Southerners."

Patsy saw these names:

"Walter Lee, Jackson, Miss."
"Harry Wade, Jackson, Miss."

The clerk offered to send a porter up to show him his room, but Patsy declined.

"That's all right. I'll find it," he said.

Arriving on the second floor, he made his way down the hallway.

No. 59 was the last room on the right.

He unlocked the door noiselessly and stepped inside.

Then he locked the door after him.

He could hear the sound of voices next door.

This told him his men were no doubt in there.

Looking along the partition between the two rooms, Patsy saw that there was a door in it.

It was half hidden by the bureau.

The young detective noiselessly moved out the bureau.

It was slow work, for the slightest creak might betray him.

Finally he had it out far enough to crouch down and peer through the keyhole.

He could see a portion of the interior of the next room.

The men, however, were not within range of his vision.

He now put his ear to the keyhole.

The men were chatting on various topics.

He could hear them plainly.

The click of glasses also came to his ear.

For fully five minutes he listened without catching anything important.

Then one of the men said:

"Trot out another bottle of that wine, Gray. It's more than passably good and my nerves need bracing to-night."

"Not too much, now," said Gray, as the pop of a bottle being opened could be heard. "We must keep in shape for to-morrow night."

"Never you fear, Gray. But once away from this hole, I warn you I propose to have the time of my life."

"Then you're satisfied to try it again to-morrow night?"

"Why, I suppose there's nothing else to do, seeing you won't leave the stuff where it is."

"What! Abandon forty thousand dollars! You must be crazy, Seabury!"

"That's all right. You know yourself that that last note would be our undoing if it were found. Supposing some one has found it?"

"That's the very reason why we must get hold of the money," returned Gray. "It isn't safe!"

"Well, have it your own way? How shall we get down to the fort?"

Patsy could scarcely repress an exclamation of triumph when he heard this.

"I'll have Tom Benson drive us again," said Gray.

"Better send word to him, then," suggested Seabury.

"You're right, Walter. I'll send a note right over."

"And say, Gray. If no one has liberated that prisoner of ours I propose to let him out."

"That's so. He'll be more than hungry by to-morrow night."

Patsy was puzzled when he heard this.

What prisoner did they mean?

Could it be Nick?

The young detective heard Gray arise from his chair and step over to the wall. It was evident he had pressed a button.

"There!" he said. "I'll have the porter call a messenger."

When the porter came up in answer to the ring Gray asked for a messenger boy.

"Send him up here," he added, closing the door.

While they were waiting Gray sat down and hastily wrote a note.

He was still writing when the messenger arrived.

"Here," said Gray, handing the sealed note, "take this over to 403 Myrtle Avenue at once. There will be no answer."

Patsy caught the address distinctly.

He had heard enough of the men's plans to know that they intended driving to some fort the following night.

There they proposed to recover a large sum of money they had evidently left there.

Without waiting to hear more, Patsy drew out from behind the bureau.

Pulling a notebook from his pocket, he wrote down what he had heard, including the address on Myrtle Avenue.

When all was quiet in the adjoining room, he slipped out into the hallway.

Reaching the clerk's desk, he got an envelope, inclosed his note in it and addressed it to Nick Carter's office.

He then left it with the clerk to be sent by special messenger.

Making his way once more to Room 59, he stepped in as before, locking the door after him.

He was about to crouch behind the bureau again when an unfortunate thing happened.

The leg at one corner of the bureau had been weakened in moving.

Suddenly it gave way.

Down came the corner of the bureau with a thud.

The men in the next room sprang to their feet.

"What was that, Seabury?" whispered Gray, excitedly.

"There's somebody at that door," returned Seabury.

A fire-escape ran outside of both rooms.

While Gray sprang toward this, Seabury made for the door.

Patsy had jumped up like a flash.

He was in a quandary for a second.

Running toward the window, he saw he could not escape in that direction.

So he dashed toward the door.

He unlocked it in a twinkling, but before he could pull it open it was forced in.

Patsy was thrown back violently.

His assailant sprang upon him before he could regain his balance.

But Patsy was as quick as a cat.

He wriggled and squirmed in the man's grasp.

It was like holding an eel.

Patsy would have got away, but just then another figure appeared in the room.

It was Gray.

He had seen from the window what was doing.

The window was locked, and he had just got there through the hallway.

Both of them were too much for Patsy.

He was overpowered.

The struggle had lasted but a few minutes.

The commotion had not been very great.

At any rate, no one noticed it.

Taking advantage of the deserted hallway, the two men bore the young detective into their own room.

Then Seabury went back and locked the door of No. 59 from the outside.

He took the key with him.

The men proceeded to bind Patsy.

"There, sonny," said Gray, when the young detective was securely tied. "I guess whatever you've heard to-night won't go any farther. What do you think about it?"

Patsy did not quite agree with them.

But he said nothing.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE SURPRISE PARTY.

When Nick reached the office with Chick he deposited the money he had found in his safe.

Nick then got a bath and donned a fresh suit of clothes.

The naval uniform he wore was decidedly soiled.

He and Chick were discussing Patsy's chances when the special messenger sent by the young detective arrived.

Nick read his aide's note.

A smile of satisfaction spread over his face as he read.

"The boy is a little whirlwind, Chick," declared Nick, handing his assistant the note. "What do you think of that?"

Chick hastily read the message.

"Bully!" he cried. "Patsy has nailed his men without a doubt."

"He says they plan to visit the fort again to-morrow night. Well, Chick, that lets us out of doing anything more to-night."

With this the two detectives prepared to turn in for a well-earned rest.

They knew Patsy would have asked for help if he needed it, so they did not worry on his account.

Early the next evening a closed carriage drove up to the corner of Myrtle Avenue and Stanton Street.

It contained Nick Carter and his assistant, Chick.

The two detectives alighted.

Just as they reached the door of the house they saw a man with a whip in his hand and wearing a driver's hat emerge from the house.

Not relishing the looks of the approaching party, he sprang back and started to close the door.

But Nick was too quick for him.

He bounded up the stairs and caught him by the collar.

"Not so fast, Mr. Benson," he said.

He took a chance on its being the man he was after.

And the driver's manner showed Nick was right.

"Who are you?" exclaimed the cabman, angrily, as he tried to free himself from Nick's grasp.

"Detectives," replied Nick, shortly. "So the less trouble you give us the better it will be for yourself."

Benson's jaw dropped.

His face turned pale.

"What do you want o' me?" he asked, huskily.

"We want you," said Nick, sternly, "as an accomplice in the murder of Col. Langworthy, of Fort Hamilton."

This was the last straw.

The hackman turned as white as ashes.

Thereafter they had no trouble in having him tell all he knew.

He ended by saying he was to drive Gray and his companion that night at nine-thirty to Fort Hamilton."

"Say, Nick," said Chick, at this point, "why can-

not I drive these two men to Fort Hamilton? Benson is about my height and build."

Nick readily agreed to this.

"Mr. Benson," said Chick, "you will take a little drive with me, for I desire to see how well I look in your clothes. Understand?"

Whether the driver understood or not, he was almost scared out of his wits.

A few minutes later the carriage was driven to a queer little house where Nick rented a room.

It contained a full assortment of disguises.

While they were gone Nick kept watch to see that no one left the house.

When Chick and his prisoner returned even Nick complimented him on the wonderful change he had made.

Putting them side by side, it would be utterly impossible to tell the difference between the two men.

Chick had even Benson's voice and accent down to perfection.

The next thing done was to take Benson to the Brooklyn headquarters, where he was locked up.

At half-past nine that night Gray and Seabury arrived at the Benson house on Myrtle Avenue.

They had with them a large package, done up in wrapping paper.

This contained a pick, shovel and lantern.

They met Tom Benson at the door.

Or, rather, the man they took to be the cabman.

They never suspected the trick.

Having passed half a dozen sentences with the supposed Benson, they got into the carriage and were driven off.

The vehicle passed along Fifth Avenue, Brooklyn, in a direct route for Fort Hamilton.

Benson's cab was followed by another, but at too great a distance to give Gray and Seabury the remotest suspicion, even had they been inclined to look back.

Fort Hamilton was at last reached.

Gray and Seabury sprang from the cab.

They had the implements they were to use with them.

Uttering a few precautionary remarks, they descended to the beach, but not by way of the wooden stairway.

The boat they had hidden in the bushes had not been discovered.

Drawing it out, they stepped in silently and were soon making for old Fort Lafayette.

They had barely disappeared around the heavy walls of the dismantled fortress when a second boat put out with muffled oars.

It contained four men—Nick, Chick and two officers in citizens' clothes.

Slowly but surely they approached Fort Lafayette in the profound darkness.

Neither moon nor stars were out.

The glimmer of a light shot from the interior of the fort and struck the water.

It came from the lantern which Gray had brought over from New York.

The occupants of the second boat could hear dull thuds with an occasional click as of a sharp instrument striking a stone.

"They are at work," whispered Chick.

The sound stopped suddenly.

Gray's and his companion's work was finished.

They were in the act of opening the iron-bound box when four stalwart forms sprang forward out of the shadows where the light of the lantern failed to reach.

There was a struggle, followed by the firing of shots.

The light went out.

Suddenly Nick cried out:

"Just light that lantern, officer."

He was breathing heavily, but beneath him, held in a grasp of iron, was Harry Gray.

Chick also had overpowered Seabury, although the latter had bowled over one of the officers.

When a light was procured, Nick slipped handcuffs over the wrists of his prisoner.

Chick did the same.

"I arrest you," Nick said, calmly, addressing the handcuffed men, "for the murder of Col. Langworthy!"

"It's a lie!" snarled Gray, who was choking with rage and disappointment.

"The courts will decide that," answered Nick, coolly. "In the meantime, I may as well tell you that people who imprison naval officers in deserted forts never come to a good end."

Seabury started at this.

"He was a detective!" he gasped, with a groan.

"Yes, Nick Carter, at your service," replied Nick. "Now another thing. It is always a waste of time to dig up a lot of junk, as we find you doing here."

And, stepping forward, Nick scattered the contents of the iron-bound box on the ground.

At this Gray could not longer restrain himself.

He fumed like a crazy man, cursing his folly and greed.

Seabury, however, broke down completely.

On the way back he confessed to his part in the crime.

He added but little, however, that Nick Carter did not already know.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE NEXT MORNING.

It was early in the morning.

Detective Sergt. Tom Marks was on the point of making an important arrest.

He had learned at last where Wicks and Muller, the discharged servants at Col. Langworthy's could be found.

He happened to pass a newsstand on his way to the house he sought.

Marks bought a *Herald*.

At the first item his eyes opened.

As he read down the column his jaw fell.

The headlines bore the startling intelligence that Col. Langworthy was murdered.

But the very next lines told of the finding of the murderers and the confession they had made.

Detective Marks decided to postpone his arrest.

Instead he hastened with all speed to Fort Hamilton.

When he arrived at Langworthy Hall, he found Nick Carter there with his two assistants, Chick and Patsy.

Nick was explaining to Maj. Scannel how he had tracked the murderers.

Patsy came in for his share of the praise.

He had been discovered in the room the two prisoners had occupied, bound hand and foot.

On the door of his own room was a note which read:

"Will be back to-night. Please reserve this room."

Gray had written this and had fastened it to the door so that no one in the hotel would suspect any harm had befallen him.

When Chick unbound him and told him of the arrest, Patsy exclaimed:

"Just my luck. I always get it in the neck just before the final curtain."

But he was well repaid for his disappointment when he heard his chief's praise.

Nick introduced him to Maj. Scannel as "one of my right-hand men and a little wonder."

Patsy swelled with pride at his words, while all regarded him with admiration.

Patsy had brought along a shoe belonging to Gray and another worn by Seabury.

The imprint beneath Col. Langworthy's window had been carefully preserved.

Nick took the shoes to the spot to see which fitted.

Seabury's was considerably too large.

But the shoe belonging to Gray filled the space exactly.

Thus Seabury's confession was verified in every particular, as well as Gray's admissions.

It seemed he really had a grievance against the old colonel.

At any rate, when brought to trial, his defense was that money which had been placed in Col. Langworthy's hands by Gray's father for investment was really stolen by him. He pleaded this as an extenuating circumstance.

However that may be, it was shown by old letters that a deep feud existed between the two families.

The jury that tried Gray, however, showed him no mercy, and he was found guilty of murder in the first degree.

A few months later he suffered the full penalty of the law.

Seabury got ten years as his accomplice, while Tom Benson, the cabman, was given two years.

It was shown that he had a criminal record in the South.

It was Gray's knowledge of this that gave him the whip hand over the driver.

Col. Langworthy's relatives were loud in their praise of the great detective's shrewdness in so quickly running the murderers to earth and recovering the money.

When Nick turned over the bank notes to them, he was requested to keep a share of them for himself and his assistants.

Old Mr. Morton could scarcely believe his eyes when he read of Nick's great feat.

He was called out of town, so could not congratulate Nick Carter in person.

But when Nick dropped into his office later in the day he found this characteristic note awaiting him:

"DEAR CARTER: Have just read the account of your wonderful capture. You win.

"HENRY MORTON."

THE END.

The murder at the "Rookery" was attended by most peculiar circumstances, and in Gaston Fox, the tricky lawyer, Nick Carter met one of the most formidable antagonists he had ever encountered. The great detective and his two clever assistants did some of the best work of their lives in ferreting out the mystery. It is all most entertainingly narrated in No. 353. "Nick Carter Forging the Fetters; or, The Outwitting of a Clever Villain."

STORIES OF MYSTERY.

This is the closing week of the contest.
The names of the prize winners will be announced in the next number.

The Devil and Apple Jack.

(By Ernest Douthard, Little Rock, Ark.)

Once upon a time, the devil and a young man named Apple Jack started to raise a crop on shares. The devil told Apple Jack that if he beat him out of his share he could marry his daughter. Now, though the devil has such a bad name, his daughter was a beautiful young lady, and all Apple Jack's thoughts, waking or sleeping, were of her. So the first year they raised sweet potatoes, and Apple Jack said to the devil:

"I will take the roots this year, and you'll take the tops, but next year you can have the roots and I'll take the tops."

The devil agreed.

The next year they raised corn, and Apple Jack took the tops. He then reminded the devil of his promise, and showed him how he had beaten him. But the devil refused to give the young lady up; whereupon Apple Jack stole her and ran away. The devil got out his team of oxen that could step forty miles and went after him, but Apple Jack went across the steep and rocky mountain, where the devil could not cross with his team, and escaped.

Old Nick went back home wringing his hands, curling his tail around and around, stamping his cloven foot, and making the air sulphurous with curses on his bad luck.

The Mystery of Sam Boyd.

(By Carroll B. Clarke, Oakdale, Cal.)

When I was quite young, I lived upon a ranch in California. It was a mountain place, beautiful indeed, and should have satisfied any one, but I was not contented with farm life. I wanted to see the city, so I left my home, changed my name, and made my way to New York.

After wandering around the city for several days, I secured a position with Jack Davis, manager of a detective agency, and in the course of time became a first-class detective.

One day while on a case, I met an elderly gentleman, who asked me to direct him to the office of Jack Davis, detective. I gave him the desired information, and went on my way. The incident was a common one, and it soon escaped my mind.

When I returned to the office, Jack asked me if I knew Charles Boyd, formerly of California, and now supposed to be in New York.

"Why, to be sure I do." I exclaimed: "it is no other than myself. Where on earth did you get that name?"

Jack looked astonished and asked me to explain myself, which I did in a few words. After satisfying his curiosity, I asked him to tell me what was wanted of me.

"Well," he said, "there was a gentleman here to-day, who wished to engage us to find one Charles Boyd. He said that the parents were dead, and had left a large fortune for the missing man, provided he could be found. He said his name was Sam Boyd."

"My missing brother," I exclaimed; "I thought him dead years ago!"

"You were mistaken, my boy," said Jack, heartily, "and I congratulate you."

I was all anxiety until my brother returned that evening. Our meeting was a joyful one. After a time we settled down to earnest conversation regarding the business at hand. I did not feel that I could leave Jack, as his business demanded my attention.

I had not seen my brother since I was a boy of fourteen. He told me all that had happened since I had left the dear old home, and I was moved to tears at his recital. Finally he left for his hotel, agreeing to return in the morning and discuss plans for the future.

The telephone bell rang shortly after Sam had left us, and I immediately responded. Central said that Mr. Dennis was wanted at the depot of Mrs. Dennis. My wife had been visiting her mother and had evidently just returned. I hastened to the station to find an excited crowd gathered around the unconscious form of my wife. I rushed to her side, just as she opened her eyes.

From a bystander I learned that she had been run down by a reckless hack driver, while she was talking to a friend. An examination showed that one arm was broken, while several minor bruises went to complete the list of injuries sustained.

I did not dare tell her that night of the change in our fortunes, for she was a very nervous woman at the best and I was afraid that the sudden news might injure her in her weakened condition.

Next morning I went to the office as usual, finding Sam and Jack deeply engrossed in their conversation, so I sat down to my desk without disturbing them, to ponder the events of the previous day and speculate on what was to come in the future.

After a time Sam and Jack came to some definite decision, and called to me.

"I have a proposition to make to you, Dennis," said Jack. "I think you and your brother should go to California, dispose of the property, bank the money, and return to New York."

"Well," I replied, "that is good enough, but what will I do with my wife?"

"Take her with you," they both exclaimed.

I had not told them about her accident, but I soon explained.

As time pressed and my wife did not feel that she could stand the long journey, it was at length decided that I

should remain in New York and continue the business, while Jack and my brother went to California.

My wife recovered from her accident and took charge of the office while I continued the usual routine of work.

Days, weeks and months passed, and still no word came from the absent ones.

Did they arrive in California? Had they been murdered and robbed, or had some serious accident befallen them? No one knew. Letter after letter was sent, but all in vain. No reply was received. I did not know what course to pursue. To go to California was useless, as well as impossible. I tried the San Francisco detectives, but they did nothing for me. At length I gave up in despair.

At last I received a letter from Melbourne, Australia. Jack and my brother were there and in poverty. They had reached California all right and in due course of time had disposed of the property and deposited the money in the bank.

On their last night in San Francisco, while looking about the waterfront, they were set upon by thugs, carried aboard a ship, and taken to sea. The vessel was wrecked, but after many privations they had at last arrived in Australia.

I immediately sent them money and they returned by the next steamer.

We are now happy and contented and engaged in a remunerative detective business.

The Halfway House Mystery.

(By Ralph L. C. Jeffery, McDonald, Pa.)

Marion was a seething bubble of excitement. Spurious coins and bills were going the rounds, "until," Mr. Jones, the grocer, declared "you don't know a good one from a bad one." Now, where this coin came from was a mystery and the people and police were both trying to unravel it. But as weeks went by and detectives and others gave it up in disgust, new ones came to take their places. The case became more tangled than ever, and finally was declared impossible. They tried to find clews in other towns, and were still on the hunt when the mystery was solved at last.

Marion had a police force of four men—a chief and three officers. The last addition to this force was a young man named Reynolds. John Reynolds, or "Fox," as his companions styled him, was a born athlete. When exercising, the muscles stood out in relief on his body and bespoke the giant strength which he possessed. "He can lick any one in town, in a square fight," declared his chief in the Marion Hotel one day.

Marion had still another attraction. It possessed a haunted house. Although it was not in the town limit, the people claimed it was a mile west of Marion, where two roads joined, stood a dilapidated stone house. For years it had resisted both fire and flood. Strange stories were afloat of it being inhabited by demons and other horrors. Lights were seen now and then, weird and ghostly, by some late passer-by. Chains were clanked, and shouts of demon laughter could be heard on warm nights. But as a general thing the house was avoided by young and old.

Officer Reynolds reported to his chief one morning as follows:

"Mr. Simpson, I hear that Detective B—— has given up the case of bogus money, and as a special favor I wish you to give it to me, and if I do not settle it in two weeks, you may call me a blundering idiot."

Mr. Simpson refused, was obstinate, but finally gave in, and promised help if he should need it.

"Now is my golden opportunity," muttered the young detective as he left the office.

* * * * * * *

The Thursday evening following the above, a dark figure might have been seen walking fast toward the "Halfway House," for so the haunted house was named. We will have little difficulty in recognizing Detective Reynolds, as we have been following him from the first. But none of his comrades would have known him in his disguise of a common farm laborer. He soon reached the house and cautiously entered the old doorway. Lighting his dark lantern, he peered into the room. A few rats scampered away, and a bat flew past close to his head. He was investigating an old piece of pipe when he heard a soft footstep just outside the door. Quickly extinguishing the light, he dropped behind a large beam and the next instant a man's form stood in the doorway. Six weary evenings had he examined and hid in this house, and had almost given it up, when at the last moment his luck came back. He could with difficulty suppress his desire to yell for joy. The last comer paused a moment and then entered. He stopped at the old fireplace and emitted a peculiar whistle. The next instant the long, flat hearthstone was raised up and disclosed to the detective a small pair of stairs. The stone was lowered after the whistler had gone down, but the youthful watcher had heard something that betrayed the counterfeiters—the clinking of metal and plates. Four other men came in and one after the other went down the secret stairs. No more came, so he decided to look over the place. After stretching out his stiffened limbs, he looked the stone trap-door over, and, filled with his discovery, he determined to wait no longer but to return to the police station and bag his game.

Hardly had he passed out of the door when he felt a hand clutch his throat. Not daring to shoot, but determined to thrash his antagonist, he dashed his fist into his enemy's stomach. He heard, with satisfaction, a low grunt of pain, but his breath was coming shorter and shorter every minute. He knew, or divined, that he had a desperate criminal to deal with and acted accordingly. Remembering a favorite trick of Nick Carter's when in close quarters, he determined to try it. With a sudden thrust, his closed fist dashed his opponent's head back so quick as to almost dislocate his neck. The next instant, Reynolds shoved a gag in his mouth, and giving him a hearty kick on the shin—he never gave any one, by the way, a heartier kick—the tough fell like a log. Quickly were the handcuffs adjusted, and after throwing his prisoner across his back, Reynolds started to the road. Several horses were tied to the fence, and when he discovered them, he almost "whooped" with joy. Hurriedly picking one out, he mounted with his burden and was off like the wind. A few minutes after, the chief of police was awakened by the jangling of the night-bell. After "swearing" the prisoner and locking him up, the posse, which consisted of eight men, rode like mad to the house which was mysterious no more. Tying their horses near a

of need, the party entered the old house. The hearthstone was quickly raised with the help of a lever, and amid the sound of clinking metal, the police descended the stairs.

Guided by the sound, which sounded louder and louder, they approached the workshop. Like too many of their kindred, the counterfeiters were prone to sniff at their enemy—the detective—and depend too much on their sentinel. But, as we know, the sentinel was where he couldn't come to them very easily in case of danger. Seven men were engaged in the criminal work, and the "bad" coins were being put in bags. There were not many lights in the room, which was an advantage for the police.

Suddenly Chief Simpson, in his deep bass voice, commanded them all to surrender. Seeing that it was worthless to shoot out the lights, as each one of the officers had a dark lantern, and what was more dangerous, a Winchester rifle, they meekly surrendered.

They all happened to be big "catches" and were sent up for long terms, except two, who were convicted for capital crimes, and hung. Our hero, "Foxie, the Detective," as his comrades call him now, was not forgotten. A high position on the Chicago police force was given him and a reward of twelve thousand dollars was the remuneration he received.

Kit Keen's Case.

(By Will H. Braham, Tyler, Texas.)

"Kit," said Chief Inspector Power, "here is a case for you."

"And I am ready," answered Kit.

"Well," resumed Power, "for over two months cases of blackmailing have been going on in this city."

"Who with, principally?" questioned Kit.

"With the firm of Daniel Roberts & Co."

"Are there any clews?"

"Several. First, here is a letter demanding that Mr. Roberts put ten thousand dollars in a certain place before midnight to-morrow."

"Is it signed, chief?"

"Yes, with the letters A. B. C."

Kit Keene leaned back in his chair and slowly puffed at his cigar.

Chief Power knew enough about Kit to let him get through with his thoughts.

"Chief, I have a plan. To-night I will visit Roberts & Company, and to-morrow night I will have a patrol of police in hiding at the spot where the money is to be concealed. Until then, chief, good-by."

After visiting Roberts & Company, Kit went to bed for the night.

The next evening the police, in citizens' clothes, were in hiding.

Soon a man walked past the spot, followed by a woman. Kit walked up to the man and asked for a match.

The man said he had none.

Kit placed his hand on the man's shoulder, and, thrusting his revolver under the woman's nose—for he thought the woman might be a man in disguise—ordered hands up.

She cried out and started to run.

The man also resisted arrest, but was soon handcuffed. Then Kit signaled to the policemen in hiding.

The prisoner redoubled his efforts to escape, but soon desisted, and was led away to the Tombs.

But the woman escaped. The next day a suspicious character was arrested, who proved to be the woman, who was known as "Notorious Nola" Gibbs, a pickpocket.

The man was "Nick" Ferris, alias "Daring Nick" Ferry, one of the worst gamblers and all-around crooks in Gotham. So ended Kit Keen's case.

The French Plans.

(By William Younken, San Diego, Cal.)

Coronado Hotel was in a state of excitement. Bellboys rushed hither and thither. The guests all seemed to be gesticulating and talking wildly. And no wonder, for had not Mr. Pierce Jacques, a retired French general of the French Republic, been found dead in his bed, stabbed through the heart with a knife. No sign of a struggle was to be seen, and the victim must have been killed before he had time to awake, so accurate had been the blow.

The chief of police had been sent for, and, pending his arrival, a tall and handsome man stepped into the room and begged to be allowed to examine things, stating that he was a detective. He walked around the room and came upon Jacques' valise upon the other side of the bed. On opening it, the contents fell out on the floor, showing that they must have been thrust in hurriedly.

Among the first things to catch his eye was a book cover, entitled "Plans of the Fortress of Marseilles." On opening it, it was found to be empty, the plans having been torn out. On looking around the floor the detective found several pieces of drawing paper. These he picked up, examined them and placed them in his wallet.

The next thing that caught his eyes was the victim's card-case. Examining the names on the cards, he replaced everything and left the room.

Later in the day the man could be seen examining the hotel registers of San Diego, which is across the bay from Coronado. At the Hotel Brewster he came across the names of two men, to which he pointed, and asked the clerk the number of their rooms.

"They left on the morning train," responded the clerk.

On inquiring at the depot he found the men had bought tickets for New York. By leaving on the noon train, one chance out of ten, he might catch the train that they would leave Los Angeles on in the evening, as the men would have to lay over all afternoon in Los Angeles to get a through one.

Noon found the detective on hand to catch it, and when he came to Los Angeles he was just in time to catch the leaving train for New York. On passing through the day coach he came upon two men who looked like Frenchmen. He then sat down in a nearby seat, and when they came to Pasadena he advanced toward the two men and clapped a pair of handcuffs on the wrists of each of them before they had time to resist, and marched them to police headquarters.

"These gentlemen are Messrs. Robespierre and Chanfuell, wanted at San Diego for the murder of Pierre Jacques."

One of the men faced about and addressed the detective:

"And who is it that makes this grave charge against two peaceable old gentlemen?"

"I, Nicholas Carter, chief of the New York Detective Bureau."

The men, seeing that they were in the clutches of a famous detective, made a clean breast of the whole thing. Pierre Jacques had been heard of as selling plans of the fortress at Marseilles to the British Government. These two gentlemen belonged to the secret police of France, and had ferreted out Jacques, made friends with him, entered his room at midnight, searched his valise and found the maps which he had drawn from memory. The only thing to do was to silence the traitor, and the deed was done.

The title on the book cover had given Nick Carter a clew, and the pieces of paper found on the floor showed that they had been torn from the book recently. Thus, it was the object of the assassins to get them in their possession. On looking over the cards there, Nick found the cards of these two gentlemen, and thus he traced them up. The plans were found in the possession of the French policemen.

Tracing a Murderer.

(By John Murphy, New Haven, Conn.)

On a Sunday night, during a violent snowstorm, a small boy was walking along the principal street of Bridgeport when he heard a cry. He ran forward and was just in time to see a man run out of the house of Frederick Maddox, the richest man in the city. He ran up the steps and fell over the body of a man, who proved to be Maddox.

John—for that was the boy's name—called a policeman, who ordered the ambulance, and the man was taken to the hospital. The next day John's mother told him to go and prove whether he was made for a detective or not.

John was walking down Sixth Street, when a man hurried [illegible] him and said:

"Want to earn a quarter, boy?"

"Yes," said John. And the man handed him a note and told him to carry it to — Main Street, and bring him back an answer. John did so and saw the man at Main Street, who looked like the man who was running away from Maddox's house on Sunday night. The man took a notebook out of his pocket and dropped a small piece of paper.

John knew if he bent down he would be caught picking up the paper, so he put his foot on it.

John's mother was not rich by any means, and there was a big hole in the sole of his shoe. John took the note and walked out of sight, and taking the paper out of his pocket, read it. It proved to be a note from Maddox to his housekeeper, saying that he thought old Williams was going to kill him, and if he was found dead that they would know who did it. John then read the note the man gave him, which was as follows:

"I killed [illegible] Sunday night and got the money in his pocketbook. This paper is torn from his notebook. Will see you in Kelly's to-night.

"[illegible] Williams."

John took the note to the policeman at Station 3, who went to Kelly's and arrested Williams. John received $5,000 from Maddox's daughter, whom he married afterward.

A Mystery Explained.

(By John Nicholson, Girard, O.)

It was Saturday night. Mother and father had gone shopping and I having a headache, and nothing to do, undressed and climbed into bed.

I had been building castles in the air for about half an hour, when I heard the low singing of a lullaby, together with the rocking of a cradle.

The house we then lived in was a small brick cottage with but one floor, and my bedroom adjoined the sitting-room. I had left the door open so I could look at the fire. I craned my neck a little to see where the humming noise came from, and there in the middle of the room I saw a woman rocking a cradle with her foot and humming a lullaby, and by her side, sleeping on the floor, was a little boy of four years. I started back in fright, but I did not cry out, for they were dressed in white and seemed enveloped in a mist.

Presently a man staggered into the room, dressed in white, and from the way he walked it was evident he was drunk. The woman walked to the man, and after taking off his overcoat, bent down to take off his shoes. She had taken off one and was unlacing the other, when suddenly the man whipped out a knife and stabbed her in the back, and she fell over dead. Then staggering over to the boy, he stabbed him to the heart. Then taking the baby, he knocked its brains out against the stove. He then stabbed himself, and all disappeared in the mist.

During all this time I was trembling in fright, but now I got up and dressed myself and went to meet my parents. Next day I told my chum what I had seen, and he told me that a family was murdered, but that they never found the murderer. It is a good thing they did not accuse anybody, for it was the father who did it.

A Night on the Lake.

(By Andrew Mirmak, Jessup, Pa.)

One moonlight night about a year ago, a friend of mine and myself went fishing from a boat on a small lake. We fished for about an hour, when the moon was obscured by clouds, and we decided to go home. Pulling our lines in, we started for the shore, but it was pitch dark. After rowing for about an hour we became puzzled, as we should have reached the shore in ten or fifteen minutes; but we rowed on for another hour, and still we did not reach shore. We thought we were going in a circle, so we fell asleep in the bottom of the boat.

When I woke up in the morning I looked around, and I saw that our boat was wedged in between two rocks of wood sticking out of the water and we had been rowing several hours without moving. The next time we went fishing we put a lantern on shore.

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348. Nick Carter's Battle Against Odds; or, The Mystery of the Detroit Pawnbroker.
349. Nick Carter on His Metal; or, The Trapping of Cool Kate.
350. Nick Carter's Life Chase; or, The Shot From Ambush.
351. Nick Carter's Chain of Guilt; or, The Robbery of Express No. 5.

STORIES OF THE FAR WEST.

Diamond Dick Weekly

These are stories about the great Diamond Dick and his son, Bertie. Every boy will be more than satisfied with these tales, because they are drawn true to life, and are extremely interesting. Diamond Dick is a dead shot, and never allows a desperado to get the drop on him.

The following is a list of the latest numbers:

359. Diamond Dick's Boy Pards; or, The Boarding House Puzzle.
360. Diamond Dick and the Safe Crackers; or, Two Spot's Level Best.
361. Diamond Dick's Last Call; or, Run Down on the Ferry.
362. Diamond Dick's Four Hand's Round; or, A Game of Keeps in the Catskills.
363. Diamond Dick's Line Up; or, The Young Sport's Banner Play.
364. Diamond Dick's Web Foot Pard; or, Queer Work on the Hurricane Deck.

TALES OF FRONTIER ADVENTURE.

Buffalo Bill Stories

Every boy ought to read the adventures of Buffalo Bill, as detailed in this library.

They are full of lively adventure, and just the kind that thrills the heart of every true boy.

The following is a list of the latest numbers:

120. Buffalo Bill's Discovery; or, The Mystery of the Gold Treasure.
121. Buffalo Bill's Clean-Up; or, Routing the Rascals of Yellow Dust City.
122. Buffalo Bill's Pards of the Plains; or, The Dead Shot Four.
123. Buffalo Bill's Helping Hand; or, The Secret of Kit Clove Kate.
124. Buffalo Bill's Boy Pard; or, Captain Hyvans and His Red Angels.
125. Buffalo Bill's Sacrifice; or, Wanata, the Indian Queen.

LARGEST CIRCULATION OF ANY LIBRARIES IN THE WORLD.

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Our Five Cent Libraries for boys always finish first in the race for circulation. Why? Because the reader knows that, in them, he is getting really good, interesting stories, his money's worth, and a chance to win a valuable and useful prize. There are others in the race, but they can't begin to compete with the S. & S. Libraries

LARGEST CIRCULATION IN AMERICA.

TIP TOP WEEKLY

The ideal publication for the American youth. Contains stories of the adventures of Frank Merriwell, the famous Yale athlete, and Dick, his younger brother, who is the pride of Pardale Academy.

There are competitions continually running in its columns, whereby the successful teams may win complete outfits, including uniforms. The following is a list of the latest numbers:

372. Frank Merriwell Marked; or, The Mystery of Black Touch.
373. Dick Merriwell's Firmness; or, A Steady Hand and a Sure Heart.
374. Frank Merriwell's Gold Train; or, His Great Victory in Mexico.
375. Dick Merriwell's Mission; or, From Pardale to the West.
376. Frank Merriwell's Battle Royal; or, Up Against the Wizards.

Greatest Detective Alive.

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No detective stories published can compare with those published in this library. Nick Carter has had innumerable thrilling adventures in which he was assisted by Chick and Patsy, two fine, intelligent young fellows. Boys, you ought to buy this publication every week and read about Nick's wonderful escapes and captures.

175 fine books for boys are being given away as prizes in competition now running in this library. Get into it, boys, and win. The following is a list of the latest numbers:

334. Nick Carter's Crooked Trail; or, The Plot for the Glassford Millions
335. Nick Carter's False Clew; or, Playing the Dupe for Big Game.
336. Nick Carter's Drag Net; or, Forcing the Hands of the Secret Six.
337. Nick Carter's Death Photo; or, Revealed by a Camera.
338. Nick Carter and the Will Forgers; or, Playing for a Fortune.

A Different Complete Story Every Week.

BRAVE AND BOLD

This line is sure to please every boy who likes variety. The stories are long, and detail the adventures of an entirely new set of characters each week. The authors are the best known, and have made excellent reputations by their highly interesting and original stories. Boys, if you want a treat, get this library every week.

The following is a list of the latest numbers:

25. Submarine Mart; or, The Wonderful Cruise of the Fire-Fly.
26. Jockey Sam; or, Riding for Fortune.
27. Frank Warren, Alchemist; or, The Diamond Makers.
28. The Jail Breaker of Shirley; or, The Boy Who Dared and Won.
29. Robert Brendon, Bell-Boy; or, Under the Hypnotic Spell.

STORIES OF THE FAR WEST.

Diamond Dick Weekly

These are stories about the great Diamond Dick and his son, Bertie. Every boy will be more than satisfied with these tales, because they are drawn true to life, and are extremely interesting. Diamond Dick is a dead shot, and never allows a desperado to get the drop on him.

A competition is now open, in which a boy may win a handsome photographic outfit. Enter into it, boys, you're welcome. The following is a list of the latest numbers:

351. Diamond Dick's Golden Spike; or, Bucking the Track Layers.
352. Diamond Dick's Schedule; or, The First Train to Dangerfield.
353. Diamond Dick's Wild West; or, A Fair Deal by Force.
354. Diamond Dick's Double Bill; or, A Hot Turn Between Acts.
355. Diamond Dick's Farewell Performance; or, A Warm Go for the Gate Money.

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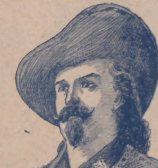
The following is a list of the latest numbers written especially for this line:

41. Old Broadbrim Tracking the Dead; or, The Hidden Battery of Doom.
42. Old Broadbrim Always on Hand; or, The Target of an Infamous Band.
43. Old Broadbrim in a Fight for Millions; or, The Daring Impersonation at Stonelow Grange.
44. Old Broadbrim at Close Quarters; or, The Puzzle of the Blue Silk Cord.
45. Old Broadbrim Under Crime's Thumb; or, In the Confines of the Dread Circle.



TALES OF FRONTIER ADVENTURE.

Buffalo Bill Stories

Every boy ought to read the adventures of Buffalo Bill, as detailed in this library, which is the only one authorized by him to print tales of his adventures on the plains among the Indians.

Get a copy and learn how you can win an elegant baseball outfit. The following is a list of the latest numbers:

107. Buffalo Bill's Balloon Trip; or, Foiling the Apaches.
108. Buffalo Bill's Drop; or, Dead-Shot Ned, the Kansas Kid.
109. Buffalo Bill's Lasso Throwers; or, Shadow Sam's Short Stop.
110. Buffalo Bill's Relentless Trail; or, The Unknown Slayer of the Black Cavalry.
111. Buffalo Bill and Silent Sam; or, The Woman of the Iron Hand.

The numbers of our Five Cent Libraries, listed above, or any previous numbers, may be purchased from all newsdealers. They will also be sent, postpaid, upon receipt of price, by the publishers.

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